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**Area Dean of Bolton**

**Area Dean of Oldham and Ashton**

**Area Dean of Manchester North and East**

**Information for Applicants**

**June 2026**

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# A Message from Bishop David

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## Welcome and thank you for your interest in the role of Area Dean.

The Diocese has had full-time Area Deans since 2021. They provide missional leadership within each deanery, working and praying to further the diocese's vision and strategy. We are now looking to appoint three Area Deans who can offer excellent support and leadership.

We are seeking priests with experience in leading and managing change, who love and serve God's people, and who are confident and resilient in the joys and demands of ministry. For all candidates, this role will be an opportunity to live out their ordained calling across wider networks, and to deepen their experience of mission and ministry in a new context. For some, this role might also represent a vocational step towards exploring more senior strategic leadership in the Church. In shaping this role, we recognise the importance of strong team support, effective induction and training, ongoing development, and fostering a deep sense of collegiality among the seven Area Deans.

These appointments come at an exciting time of transition. Manchester Diocese has an inspiring vision, and we are making good progress towards achieving this with the development of a wide range of programmes and projects. Recent national church funding now enables us to be ambitious with our plans for the future.

As we are appointing to three Area Dean roles across different deaneries, we invite applications to this core post rather than to a specific location. You are welcome to indicate any particular interest or context in your application, and we will then work with you through the process to prayerfully discern together which deanery might be the best fit. This approach allows us to match gifts, experience and calling with the opportunities available.

It is important to us that the new Area Deans are committed to diversity, inclusion and racial justice. We are also looking for applicants who are generous in working with a breadth of traditions and spirituality in the Church of England. In particular, we welcome women candidates and candidates of global majority heritage to help ensure the diversity of our senior clergy team.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming our new Area Deans to the diocese and supporting them with their work.

Yours in Christ,



The Rt Revd Dr David Walker,  
Bishop of Manchester



## About Us

Manchester Diocese serves a vibrant, dynamic and creative community in the North West of England. It covers an area of 416 square miles and has a total population of 2.2 million. The diocese is divided into four archdeaconries, seven deaneries and 33 mission communities. There are more than 300 places of worship and chaplaincies, which are organised into 256 parishes and 175 benefices.

Geographically, the diocese takes in the two cities of Salford and Manchester and the metropolitan boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale, Bury and Bolton. Parts of the metropolitan boroughs of Wigan, Trafford, Stockport, Tameside and Blackburn with Darwen, and most of the borough of Rossendale in Lancashire, are also within the diocese. It has the fourth-highest population density of any diocese in the Church of England.

While predominantly urban, a significant part of the diocese is rural, although less than 3% of the population of the diocese lives in these areas. 125 (48%) of our parishes fall within the 10% most deprived nationally.

Parishes and chaplaincies across our diocese are supported by the Diocesan Board of Finance, based at St John's House in Bury town centre. This team works with churches and congregations across the diocese to achieve our strategy and our mission goals. It also provides support with clergy stipends and housing, finance, safeguarding and governance.

Across the diocese, 193 Church of England primary and secondary schools educate over 58,000 pupils every day. These schools are mostly funded by local authorities, with the diocese providing support with religious education and Christian ethos, governance, the recruitment of head teachers, admissions, and building projects. The team which supports these schools is also based at St John's House, as part of the Diocesan Board of Education.



## Our Vision

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Our vision is for Manchester Diocese to be a *worshipping, growing, transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community.*

Much of what we are doing in Manchester Diocese is already contributing to a culture of hope and an expectation of growth, working with our parishes, schools and chaplaincies. This includes many forms of inherited as well as fresh expressions of church. We serve in an area that has a rich history of culture and innovation, made up of diverse and vibrant communities, and a longstanding commitment to social justice. It is a wonderful place to engage in Gospel Ministry.

*Our work together grows out of Jesus's Great Commandment which is to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...and love your neighbour as yourself'. (Matthew 22: 36-40)...*

*... and out of his Great Commission, 'to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19-20).*

Our strategy is based on positive, inspiring and relevant plans for the future. It is enabling us to bring together key areas of opportunity and challenge, building on our learning and experience from the significant changes and investments that are already underway. Many of these changes have focused on new ways of working together, which are becoming embedded in the life of our diocese.

Building on these successes, we are shifting to the next level in setting our priorities and working out what we want to achieve next. Given the excellent start that has been made, we now have the opportunity to be even more creative and ambitious with our plans for the future.

Based on four key themes – *Parish Renewal, Growing Younger, Church Planting and Revitalisation, and Developing Missional Leaders* – this strategy will guide our work over the coming years. We have recently been awarded significant additional funding from the national church as part of the Diocesan Investment Programme to support us with this mission and ministry.

At the heart of this support is our commitment to **Parish Renewal**, providing specialist, practical help to ensure the missional and financial sustainability of our parishes. This includes financial support for those wishing to establish New Worshipping Communities. Our aim is to ensure that every parish is equipped to thrive and serve its local community.



We are deepening our commitment to **Growing Younger**, nurturing children and young people on their discipleship journey. Building on the success of the Places Project in Bolton and the Man Dio Growing Faith programme across the rest of our diocese, the Encounter Project will provide additional children's and youth workers, while the Equip training initiative will support lay and ordained leaders so they grow in confidence and develop their skills in ministry with children and young people.

Alongside this, we are focused on **Church Planting and Revitalisation** through strengthened partnerships with our existing resource churches and the Antioch Network. Six new resource churches representing a range of traditions will also be established and supported in planting new churches over the next eight years.

We are also building on the work that is already taking place to bring forward and develop the next generations of **missional ordained and lay leaders** at every stage of their vocation, including a new, diverse generation of leaders equipped to grow faith communities.

In all of this, we are deeply committed to championing **racial justice** and ensuring that our clergy, lay leaders, and congregations represent the rich diversity of our diocese.

We are working towards the 2030 **net-zero carbon** goal set by General Synod, by supporting our churches and schools in measuring their energy use and taking simple, practical steps to reduce their carbon footprint.

We will continue to provide a safe environment for all by promoting effective **safeguarding**.

Across our diocese, people hold diverse views and express their faith through **different traditions**, united in a passion for Jesus Christ and his Church. Our bishops honour these differences by inviting church communities from across our diocese to learn together, support one another and listen to God.

These priorities align with the Church of England's overall vision, which is to create a church of missionary disciples where mixed ecology is the norm, and whose membership is becoming younger and more diverse.



# 2026 - Three Strategic Priorities for Area Deans

## Renewing Parishes

Area Deans are at the forefront of Parish Renewal, walking alongside parishes and mission communities in enabling bold strategies for sustainable growth. As a Diocese we are partnering with Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) on an accompanied learning journey, with the four deaneries of Oldham and Ashton, Rochdale, Manchester North & East and Manchester South and Stretford beginning a 12month learning journey in June 2026. This will be extended across the rest of the diocese in 2027. The Area Deans will be leading on this process alongside other members of the Mission and Ministry team.

*"Relationship matters more than targets and metrics... trust is forged in times of challenge and deficit."*

## Vision and Strategy Engagement

Area Deans play a key role in embedding the diocesan vision and strategy at a local level, helping to sustain momentum beyond initial gatherings and ensure that ongoing engagement leads to sustainable action. They do this by convening conversations, resourcing leaders, and modelling a hopeful and honest culture. This enables deaneries to reflect on what is being heard and discern next steps together. This includes fostering prayer, working with PCCs and synods, creating space for both challenge and encouragement, and supporting clergy and lay leaders to step into something new.

*"You are at once parish-facing... and yet not a full member of that Leadership Team... set apart from your clergy colleagues, and yet sitting among them."*

## Supporting Leaders

Area Deans have a vital role in leadership support, offering care and encouragement for leaders across the deanery. Working closely with Bishops and Archdeacons, they support leaders to build confidence, increase resilience and develop a clear sense of calling in mission and evangelism. Support for first incumbents and those in positions of first responsibility is particularly important within this. Through chapter, MDR conversations, and informal relationships, they foster a culture of support and growth. In doing so, Area Deans contribute to a leadership culture that is prayerful, well-supported, and increasingly equipped to lead healthy, growing churches.

*"There is something about regularity of contact, repeated contact... and a sense of being on their side...."*

*"I have found the role of Area Dean to be the most rewarding and challenging of my ministry, and prepare to move on from it with profound gratitude for the prayers, support and companionship of all those with whom it has been my privilege to spend time.*

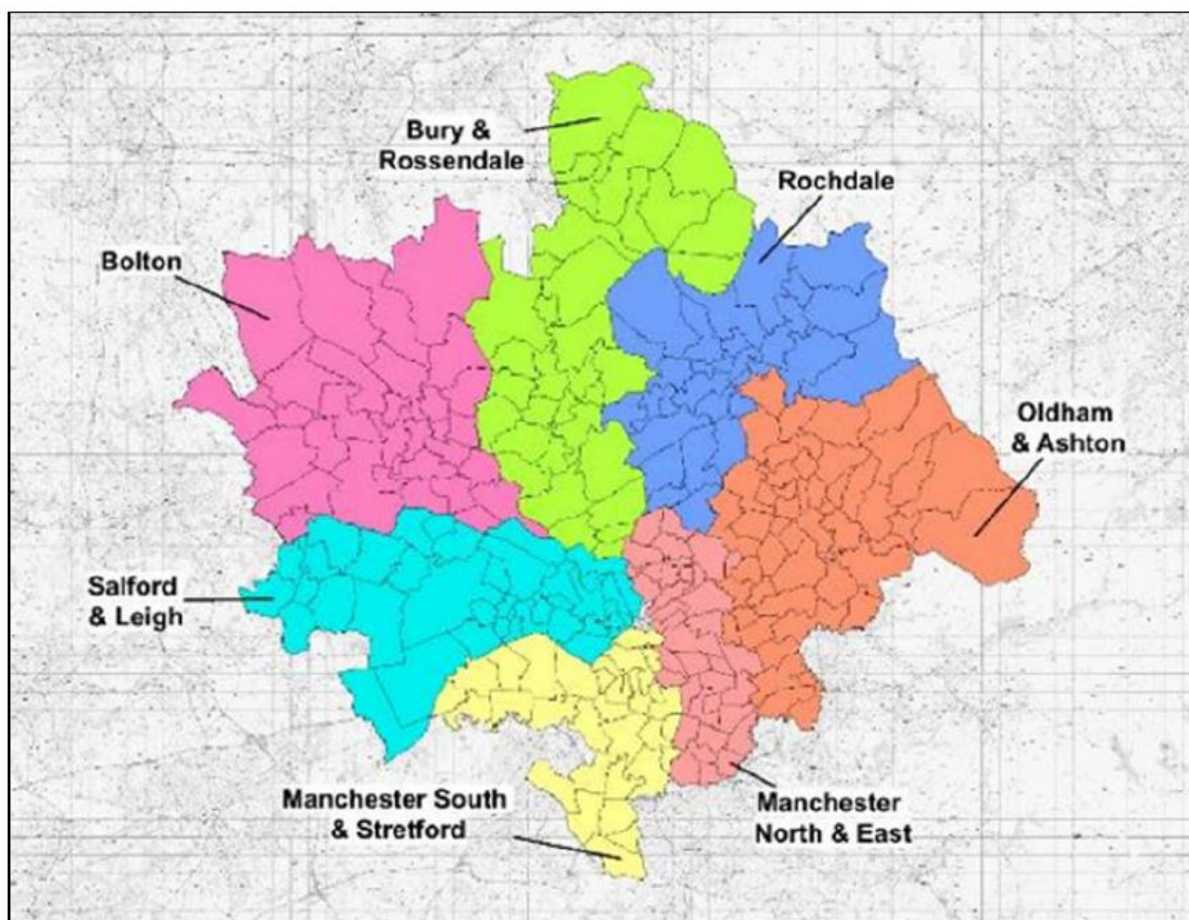
*I leave with an acute sense of the challenges and opportunities around the Area Dean role – the inherent flexibility and parish-facing nature of the work versus the multiple accountabilities and the regular adaptations the role seems to require in order to allow for shifts in Diocesan focus and strategy.."*

*(Revd Canon Simon Cook, current Area Dean of Bolton, appointed to become Archdeacon of Salford and Bolton in summer 2026)*



## Our Deaneries

Our seven deaneries were formed to develop and establish new ways of working to achieve our vision for the diocese. In 2021 our transformation process brought together twenty smaller deaneries to increase opportunities for mutual support, and crucially to allow each deanery to have an Area Dean whose full-time ministry would be focused on leading transformation at the local level. The Area Deans work closely with elected Lay Chairs, as well as the necessity of working alongside their fellow Area Deans to ensure a strong and mutually supportive team.

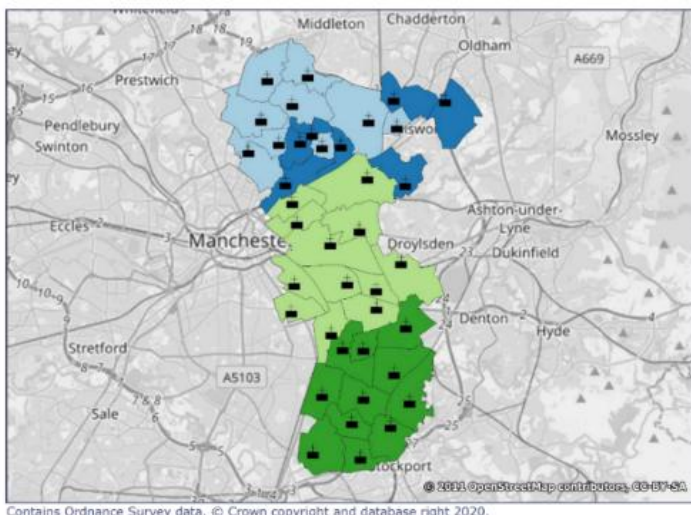


## Manchester North and East

The deanery covers 28 square miles, and is made up of 39 parishes and four mission communities. The area is mostly within the City of Manchester but also encompasses areas in Stockport district north of the Mersey and parts of Oldham. Separately named urban areas within the City of Manchester include Ardwick, Beswick, Blackley, Gorton, Harpurhey, Levenshulme, Newton Heath and Openshaw. Those within Stockport include the Heaton and Reddish. The deanery also includes Hollinwood and parts of Failsworth and Chadderton within Oldham District.

The Deanery area is undergoing a large-scale and long-term regeneration focused on improving housing, health, connectivity, and economic opportunity in some of Manchester's most deprived neighbourhoods, including Collyhurst, Harpurhey, Moston, and Miles Platting. Central to this is the North Manchester Strategy, which will see around £6 billion of investment over 15–20 years, targeting better homes, improved health outcomes, and increased life chances

Parish share contributions remain strong, revitalisation grants have shown impact, and options for pastoral reorganisation are being explored where needed. Current missional priorities across the area include healthy patterns of ministry and mission across diverse communities and church traditions, deepening provision for children and youth work, and ensuring ALMs and other expressions of emerging leadership are encouraged.

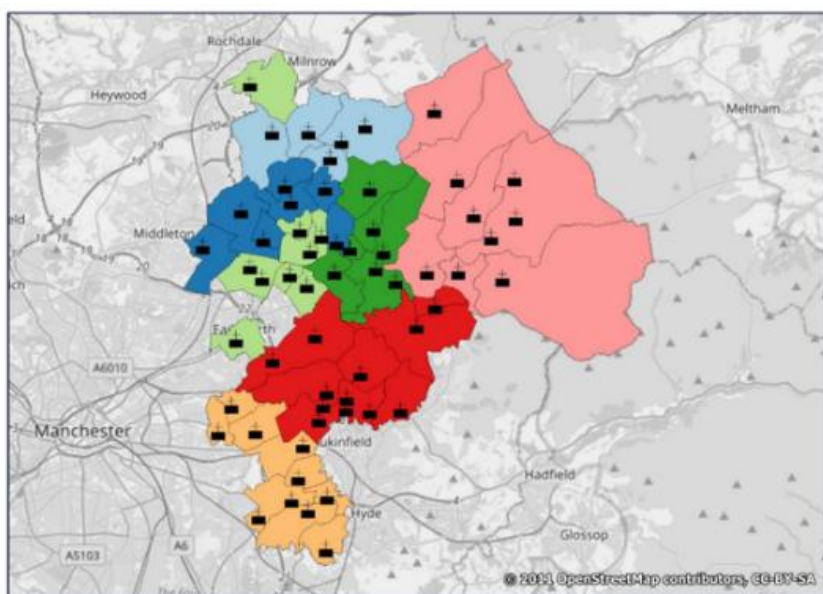


## Oldham and Ashton

Oldham and Ashton Deanery is located to the north of the diocese, covering 85 square miles. It is made up of seven mission communities and 48 parishes. The deanery spreads across Oldham and Tameside local authority boundaries. Within Oldham this includes the centres of Chadderton, Lees, Oldham, Royton, and Shaw. In Tameside this includes Ashton-under-Lyne, Denton, Droylsden, Mossley and Stalybridge. Villages and hamlets include Delph, Uppermill, and Lydgate.

As elsewhere there is significant regeneration within the deanery. Significant investment is driving large-scale regeneration across the area, delivering thousands of new homes, jobs, and improved public spaces, alongside further plans for housing and employment growth supported by strong transport links and high-growth industries.

Recent months have seen some progress towards pastoral reorganisation, local vision days, and in some areas increasing confidence in the “Growing Younger” thread of work through Youth Sacred Spaces, stronger school-parish links, and emerging plans for greater intergenerational ministry. The opportunity is substantial, though leadership confidence and resilience needs to be further built. Missional priorities across the area include ongoing strengthening of relationships across the mission communities, supporting those parishes with issues around their buildings, and moving towards financial sustainability for parishes which are particularly fragile.



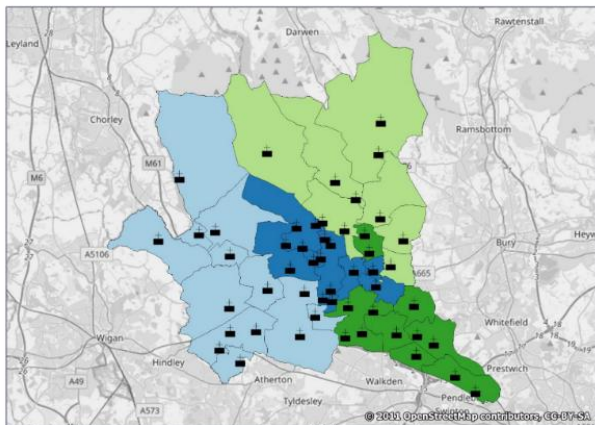
## Bolton Deanery

Bolton Deanery is located to the north-west of the diocese, covering 84 square miles. There are 33 parishes and 49 churches across the deanery, organised into four mission communities. The area includes the large town of Bolton and the smaller towns of Farnworth, Horwich, Kearsley, Little Lever and Westhoughton. The deanery also includes villages and hamlets such as Belmont and Edgworth.

There is significant development and regeneration across parts of the deanery, including the £1.5bn "Bolton Vision" masterplan bringing retail, housing and transport infrastructure into the heart of Bolton itself. New housing developments in areas like Rivington Chase and Horwich reflect growing demand and aspiration. Bolton is also one of the most ethnically diverse towns in the Diocese, with strong south-Asian communities and a rich multicultural landscape.

In recent years we have been pioneering new approaches with the Places Project in Bolton, and we are building on this experience as we develop a comprehensive approach to engaging with children and young people in Bolton and more widely through the Encounter and Equip programmes. A Resource Church for Bolton is also soon to be planted, part of a diocesan strategy to see repeated parish revitalisation through equipping leaders and planting churches.

Missional priorities include a proactive strategy to engage parishes early in reorganisation and vacancy conversations, empowering lay leaders and supporting their wellbeing, and encouraging local work on welcome and discipleship pathways.



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# Role Description

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**Stipend:** £38,445 per annum

**Hours of Work:** Full-time

**Terms of Service:** Common Tenure

## Purpose

Full-time Area Deans in Manchester Diocese are leaders in mission in the deanery, working and praying to further the vision and strategy of the diocese.

## Responsibilities

Area Deans have four key areas of responsibility:

- **Strategic Implementation** - with the Suffragan Bishop and Archdeacon, leading and implementing a clear strategy for the deanery
- **Change Management** – identifying opportunities for growth in mission communities and driving the change, working closely with mission community leaders
- **Clergy Development and Support** – envisioning and empowering clergy to be team leaders in local mission, through the ongoing mentoring of a number of key clergy leaders, including new incumbents
- **Deanery Leadership** – supporting and encouraging the mission and ministry of the clergy in the deanery and supporting clergy with their wellbeing, through the deanery chapter and the wider work of the Deanery through the Deanery Synod.

## Accountability

The Diocesan Bishop appoints and licenses the Area Dean. They will work as a team with other Area Deans and Archdeacons under the leadership of the relevant Suffragan Bishop. They will be accountable to the relevant Archdeacon for their day-to-day ministry and the four areas of responsibility outlined above.

## Key Relationships

Each Area Dean will work closely with Suffragan Bishop and the Archdeacon, and also with the Lay Chair and mission community leaders in the deanery.

There is a clear expectation that Area Deans will work collaboratively with one another, sharing learning, experience and responsibility. Together, they form a key part of the Diocese's wider Transformation Team, engaging in training and development together

and contributing collectively to the consistent development and implementation of the diocesan strategy for growth and mission.

They will work in close co-operation with key lay and ordained church leaders in their deanery, in particular new incumbents, involving them in shaping the strategy for the deanery and supporting them with the implementation of agreed changes.

They will also work alongside and engage with lay leaders in the deanery including Church Wardens, Readers and Authorised Lay Ministers.

Other key partners are Diocesan Board of Finance and Diocesan Board of Education staff, who will provide practical support with implementing the strategy for each deanery, in particular the Transformation Director and the Deanery Transformation Support Officers.

## **Key Tasks**

### **Strategic Implementation**

1. Working with the Suffragan Bishop, Archdeacon and DBF and DBE colleagues, coordinate the development of a five-year strategy for the deanery, identifying the key opportunities for growth and mission.

### **Change Management**

2. Support mission communities with the development of proposals for growth and mission and the implementation of the deanery's five-year strategy.
3. Ensure that leadership and cover is provided during periods of vacancy and transition for individual parishes, and that there is a smooth transition to new structures and ways of working, as part of the wider change programme for the deanery.
4. Participate in the recruitment process for clergy and other staff in the deanery, attending pre-vacancy meetings and being part of the interview process as appropriate.

### **Clergy Development and Support**

5. Ensure that all who hold the Bishop's license actively engage with personal and professional development opportunities, and to carry out MDRs in the deanery as required.
6. Provide mentoring and support for clergy who are new in post, particularly those in their first incumbencies.

7. Provide pastoral care and support for all those who hold the Bishop's license in the deanery.

### **Deanery Leadership**

8. Convene the deanery chapter with the express aim of achieving the full and active participation of all stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers, encouraging creative and supportive working relationships.
9. Ensure there is effective communication and dialogue between members of the deanery, and also between the deanery and the wider diocese.
10. Work closely with mission community leaders to support them in agreeing the vision for their mission community, developing new ways of working, and helping establish a culture of mutual accountability and support.
11. Work closely with the Borough Deans to ensure effective links with civic, ecumenical and inter-faith partners.
12. Provide visible leadership in promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of the life of the deanery, putting in place measures to ensure that our church leadership – lay and ordained – and our congregations, reflect the diversity of the deanery.

### **Statutory Responsibilities**

13. Fulfil the statutory responsibilities of the Area Dean, specifically:
  - Act as joint chair of the Deanery Synod
  - Act as Returning Officer for lay elections of deanery representatives to Diocesan Synod and other committees
  - Act as the Archdeacon's representative with regard to any irregularities or breakdown of parochial systems and to conduct parish visitations as necessary
  - Act as sequestrator in a parochial vacancy.

## Person Specification

<b>Requirements</b>	
<b>Spirituality and Tradition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mature faith and spirituality</li> <li>▪ A prayerful approach to life</li> <li>▪ Generous in working with a breadth of traditions and spirituality in the Church of England</li> </ul>
<b>Experience and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An ordained priest in the Anglican church with experience as an incumbent</li> <li>▪ A visionary and strategic thinker – someone who will be able to develop the deanery for future sustainability and growth</li> <li>▪ Understanding and experience of the process of leading and managing change, including culture and structural change</li> <li>▪ Experience of conflict management and mediation, and of moving complex situations towards transformation</li> <li>▪ Experience of developing and leading effective teams</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge and experience of fruitful approaches to developing and growing the church</li> <li>▪ Some understanding of the formal processes of the Church of England</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of safeguarding best practice</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and Competencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Able to hold and articulate vision and strategy</li> <li>▪ Able to develop partnerships and networks</li> <li>▪ Effective leader of people as an enabler, delegator and team player</li> <li>▪ Effective in managing competing demands and finding practical solutions</li> <li>▪ Able critically to appraise initiatives based on the available evidence and adapt and develop plans in the light of experience.</li> </ul>

Candidates will not be expected to meet all the requirements below at the point of application, but to demonstrate the potential to learn and develop in all these areas. A comprehensive programme of development and training opportunities will be provided to the newly appointed Area Dean to support them with this.

## Additional Information

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### Application timetable

The closing date for applications is Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2026 (midnight).

Shortlisted candidates will be informed by Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

The interviews are scheduled for Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September at St John's House, 155-163 The Rock, Bury BL9 0ND. Further details will be provided to shortlisted candidates.

If you would you like to discuss the role before applying, please contact our HR Team at [hr@manchester.anglican.org](mailto:hr@manchester.anglican.org) who will put you in touch with the relevant Archdeacon.

### Eligibility and pre-employment 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.

### Safeguarding

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.

### Stipend, housing and office space

The stipend is set at £38,445 per annum and, in accordance with the usual provisions, a parsonage will be provided.

Holidays and expenses are paid according to the diocese's guidelines for office holders.

The Area Dean will be appointed on Common Tenure and is expected to comply with its associated terms of service.