



Assessment of Common Fund for 2027

The function of the Common Fund is to be the primary source of funding for the provision of ministry across the Diocese. The Common Fund system is intended to apportion, in an equitable and understandable way, the contribution being requested from each parish.

The calculation determines the sum attributable to each parish resulting from its declared participant numbers, adjusted by the parish's socio-economic banding, a church buildings allowance and any potential adjustment for being a larger church.

1) Assessable Participants

The most significant factor in your parish's Common Fund assessment is the number of participants, which you are asked to declare as accurately as possible on a Participation Survey Form. The assessment for 2027 will use the average number of participants for 2024, 2025 and 2026.

A. Please use the following criteria to determine those who should be counted as participants:

Box 1 of the Participation Survey Form/Box 5 of the online form

- Those who think of your Church as their principal place of worship.
- Those who are aged 18 or over.
- Those who would normally attend Sunday or midweek services, or a "Fresh Expression of Church" at least once a month.
- Those who lead worship in your church (although a minister may be apportioned across a number of churches).
- Those who are temporarily away, for example on holiday or business, who otherwise consider themselves to be full participants in the life of your Church.
- Those who have joined your church in the last year from another church and are not new to Christian faith.
- Those who are new to the Christian Faith since your last annual return (although an equivalent allowance will be made; see section B below).

The definition of what constitutes a "Fresh Expression of Church" has caused much confusion in previous years. We need to be sure that everyone is including people involved with Fresh Expressions of Church in a consistent manner, but we also need to make sure that these meet the criteria to be considered as such. For this reason, we have produced

(at page 6) the criteria that should be applied when determining whether to include people involved with these groups. The definition is a bit technical, so you may need to consult with other leaders within your church/parish to determine whether it meets the definition of a Fresh Expression.

Box 5 of the Participation Survey Form/Box 9 of the online form

- Those who are ill and unable to come to church.
- Those who receive home communion and consider themselves to be a member of your church; and
- Those who live in a nursing, care, or residential home and consider themselves to be a member of your church.

Note: Whilst we are asking for the data in Section 5/9, because these people are officially members of the worshipping community, they will not be included in the final calculation.

B. New or returning to the Christian Faith

Box 2 of the Participation Survey Form/Box 6 of the online form

- Enter those who are new or returning to the Christian Faith since your last annual return. They are included in the number on the Participation Survey Form at Box 1/Box but also entered at 3 for deduction from the total. The object of including the number in two places is to see clearly the number of those new or returning to the Christian Faith, rather than simply excluding them. The aim of the deduction is to avoid any perceived disincentive to growth. You should not include people just because they have moved into your parish in the previous 12 months, unless they are also new or returning to faith.

C. Undergraduate students living away from home

Box 3 of the Participation Survey Form/Box 7 of the online form

- Enter those who are undergraduate students living away from home. They are included in the number on the Participation Survey Form at Box 1/5 but also entered at 3/7 for deduction from the total.

D. Please use the following criteria to determine those who should *not* be counted as participants:

- Those who are visitors — holidaymakers, baptism parties, etc.
- Those who consider their 'home' church to be another part of your Benefice or Mission Community. Please pass their names to the relevant Churchwardens so they are included in the correct church's figure. However, this person can be shared between two places by agreement, e.g. 0.5 for each of two parishes.

- Those who receive ministry from, but have no other connection with, your church. For example, residents of nursing, care, or residential homes who receive Holy Communion because the home is in the parish but otherwise do not consider themselves to be participants in the life of your church.
- Each person should only be counted once, irrespective of the number of services they attend.
- If you are uncertain which the individual's principal place of worship is, ask them.

E. Other points of reference

- Your last three declared participation figures are shown in the enclosed deanery summary.
- Your church may hold a list of names of those who attend regularly, to which you can refer (this can be very helpful).
- The participation figure will normally be greater than the attendance at a typical service, given that even the most committed participants are unlikely to attend on every occasion.
- Your parish's electoral roll is not necessarily a good indicator of participation, although it may provide a useful list of people to think about.

2) Socio-economic adjustment

This part of the assessment places each parish in one of 13 socio-economic bands, based on the English Indices of Deprivation for 2025. The band for your parish will determine the amount requested per assessable participant. The Indices of Deprivation are produced by the government and adjusted by the Archbishops' Council Statistics Department to match ecclesiastical parishes. They measure the degree of deprivation in parishes from 0 (no deprivation) to 100 (total deprivation), based on statistics covering:

- Employment
- Income
- Education, skills and training
- Living environment
- Barriers to housing and services
- Health deprivation and disability
- Crime

Band A covers parishes with a score of 0 to 14; thereafter band B covers parishes with a score of 15 to 19, band C from 20 to 24 and so on. Bands B to M are based on band A, with a discount of 5% between each band, as set out in the following table:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Band</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Band</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
Under 15	A	100%	45 – 49	H	65%
15 – 19	B	95%	50 – 54	I	60%
20 – 24	C	90%	55 – 59	J	55%
25 – 29	D	85%	60 – 64	K	50%
30 – 34	E	80%	65 – 69	L	45%
35 – 39	F	75%	70 and over	M	40%
40 – 44	G	70%			

The score for each parish is rounded up to the next whole number. Thus, for example, a parish with a score of 19.1 will be rounded up to 20, thus placing it in a lower socio-economic band.

The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation is for 2025 and was received in the second half of 2025. We will, therefore, be applying the updated indices for the first time for the 2027 assessment, which is likely to lead to a change in the banding for some parishes.

3) Church buildings allowance

In recognition that church buildings need to be maintained – and the fewer the participants, the greater this burden becomes, an allowance of £2,000 is made in respect of each licensed place of worship, which is maintained at the expense of the PCC.

4) Minimum Allocation

Notwithstanding any of the details in sections 1 to 4 above, there will be a minimum assessment of £250.

5) Larger churches allowance

There is an allowance for those parishes with more than 200 people in their worshipping community. Below is the table showing how this affects the calculation. However, parishes should continue to declare their actual number and not attempt to calculate the reduced figure, as this will be done centrally prior to sending out the requests.

No. of Participants	Discount	How many participants are counted in the request?
Up to 200	0%	Everyone is counted
201 – 300	30%	Everyone is counted up to 200 and then 70% of participants over 200
301 – 400	40%	The total for 300 members is taken, which is 270, and then 60% of the members over 300 is added
401+	50%	The total for 400 members is taken, which is 330, and then 50% of the members over 400 is added

6) Maximum Annual Increase

The maximum year-on-year increase in the Common Fund request made will not exceed the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rate +5%, when compared to the previous year. For example, if the rate of CPI inflation is 2.5%, the maximum increase will then be 7.5%.

This document is also available on the Diocesan website at:

<http://www.exeter.anglican.org/resources/common-fund>

If you need further help, please phone 01392 272686 and ask for the Finance Team or email accounts.department@exeter.anglican.org

Fresh Expressions of Church

A fresh expression of church is a new gathering or network that engages mainly with people who have never been to church. There is no single model, but the emphasis is on starting something that is appropriate to its context, rather than cloning something that works elsewhere.

Over 3,000 of these new forms of church now exist in almost every denomination and tradition in the UK. Fresh expressions of church:

- Serve those outside church;
- Listen to people and enter their culture;
- Make discipleship a priority;
- Form church.

Definition

A more formal working definition is that:

A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.

- *It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples;*
- *It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context.*

Is it a fresh expression of church?

A phrase like 'fresh expression of church' can be vague and unclear. Sometimes the label is used to cover almost anything - even a new church noticeboard! However, the important thing is intention: When a new mission project or group begins, what is the intention?

A fresh expression of church is not:

- An old outreach with a new name ('rebranded' or 'freshened up');
- A bridge project, to which people belong for a while before going to 'proper' church - some people do end up moving into a more traditional church, others see the fresh expression as their church, while others again have a foot in both.

If the intention is to work towards establishing a new community or congregation especially for those who have never been involved in church (un-churched) or once were, but left for whatever reason (de-churched), then it is a fresh expression of church in the making. A fresh expression of church like this may look very different to traditional church. If, though, the intention is to do mission better or more imaginatively in order to attract people to an existing church, it is not a fresh expression (although doing that is always an excellent idea). The aim of a fresh expression is not to provide a stepping-stone into existing church, but to form a new church in its own right. Therefore, it is important to decide the direction you are heading in, before you begin the journey.