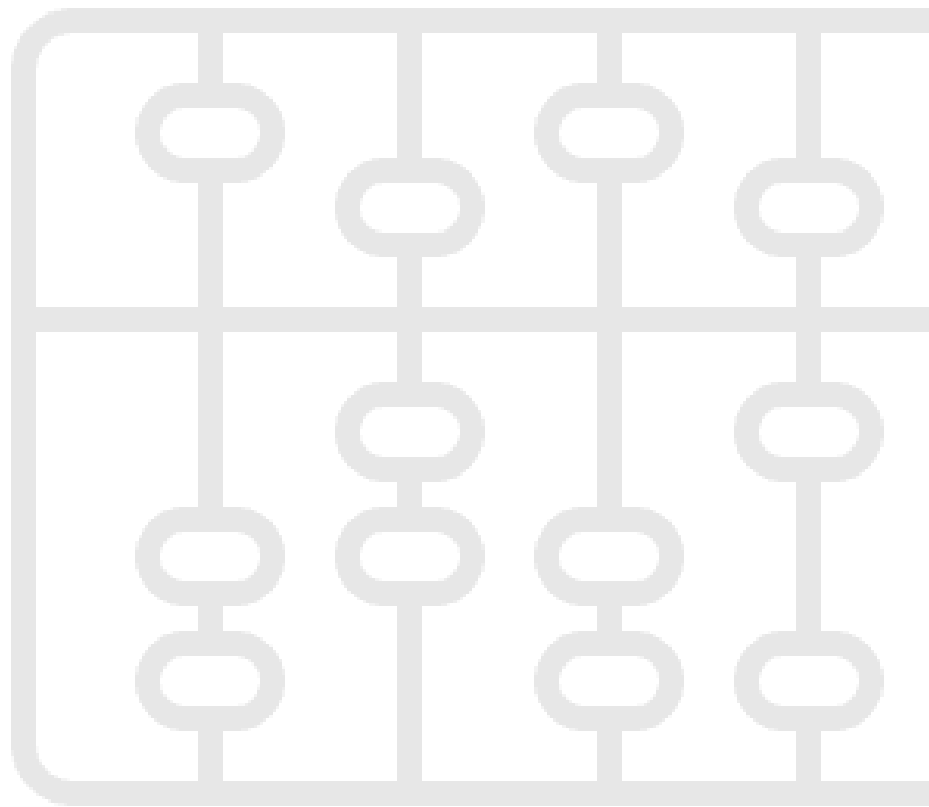


# An audit of professionals in the fields of Children, Young People and Family Ministry who are qualified at doctoral level

A collaborative project by Dr Becca Dean, Rev Dr Sally Nash, Dr Carolyn Edwards and Dr Jo Griffiths

July 2025



*Thank you to all our colleagues and peers who participated in this research. It is a privilege to work alongside you in our professional community. Research and academic work with children and young people's ministry is an important vocation, and this community has been and continues to be a great source of inspiration and courage. Thank you to those who have paved the way before us for such a vocation.*

*We also want to give particular thanks to the Common Awards team at Durham University for providing us with a Seedcorn Grant to fund this research into CYPF ministries, and to our employing organisations who champion this work with children and young people: Ridley Hall, St Padarn's Institute and the Church of England.*

# Contents of Report

|                                                                                                                                                                |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Introduction .....                                                                                                                                             | 1             |
| Doctoral Qualification Pathways .....                                                                                                                          | 2             |
| Doctoral Qualification Timelines .....                                                                                                                         | 3             |
| Nature of Level 8 Qualification.....                                                                                                                           | 4             |
| Research Subjects .....                                                                                                                                        | 6             |
| Methodological Approaches.....                                                                                                                                 | 6             |
| Motivation for Doctoral Study .....                                                                                                                            | 7             |
| Funding availability .....                                                                                                                                     | 9             |
| Enabling/inhibiting factors to doctoral study.....                                                                                                             | 10            |
| Sharing Doctoral Research .....                                                                                                                                | 12            |
| Post-doctoral career development .....                                                                                                                         | 13            |
| Investing in the next generation of doctoral students: .....                                                                                                   | 13            |
| Research Specialisms .....                                                                                                                                     | 14            |
| <br><b>Recommendations</b> .....                                                                                                                               | <br><b>16</b> |
| Recommendation 1: To develop a postgraduate community of practice in the fields of CYPF ministry from Ridley Hall.....                                         | 17            |
| Recommendation 2: To advocate for CYPF Ministry as a valuable field of church ministry and theological inquiry. ....                                           | 18            |
| Recommendation 3: To contribute to the debates around safeguarding and good practice in work with children and young people.....                               | 18            |
| Recommendation 4: Promote the ongoing ministry development and formation of such professionals..                                                               | 18            |
| Recommendation 5: To support the dissemination of innovative research which responds to current issues of mission and ministry with CYPF. ....                 | 19            |
| Recommendation 6: Creating structures of support and plausibility to this pathway. ....                                                                        | 19            |
| Recommendation 7 Facilitate the integration of insights from research into wider theological education context including church leaders in IME1 and IME2. .... | 19            |



## Introduction

This research was carried out in response to a gap in collated data that we noticed in the fields of CYPF (children, young people and families') ministry. We are a relatively small academic community in the UK but realised that as we explored the resources available to train more CYPF ministers to BA and MA levels, that there was little data about the community of professionals qualified to doctoral level, which is an important part of that resource. We realised that asking questions which gave us more information about the pathways that these professionals had taken, and the associated challenges in obtaining these rare qualifications in the field, might produce better information and clearer data to explore how to support this community and grow its resource.

This conversation grew between this research team in response to the Common Awards Seedcorn Grant's call for applications to research in the field of CYPF ministry and theological education. We planned for a collaborative research project to produce a report that would audit the current community of professionals trained to doctoral level. This audit would provide a comprehensive list of specialist research areas, and the pathways and institutions which have enabled the professionals' doctoral-level training. Furthermore, by undertaking a survey within this community, the audit would enable us to identify both opportunities and challenges for growth in this field.

We use our shared connections and insights to generate a survey, and invited participants who had completed or were working towards a 'level 8' qualification to fill this survey in online. The research group used our insider contacts to share our survey, and we encouraged our contacts to continue to share the survey further, using a snowball sampling approach.

Altogether, we had 47 participants. One of these participants had done two doctorates and gave answers on both qualifications. The participant group shared some basic information about their demographic characteristics:

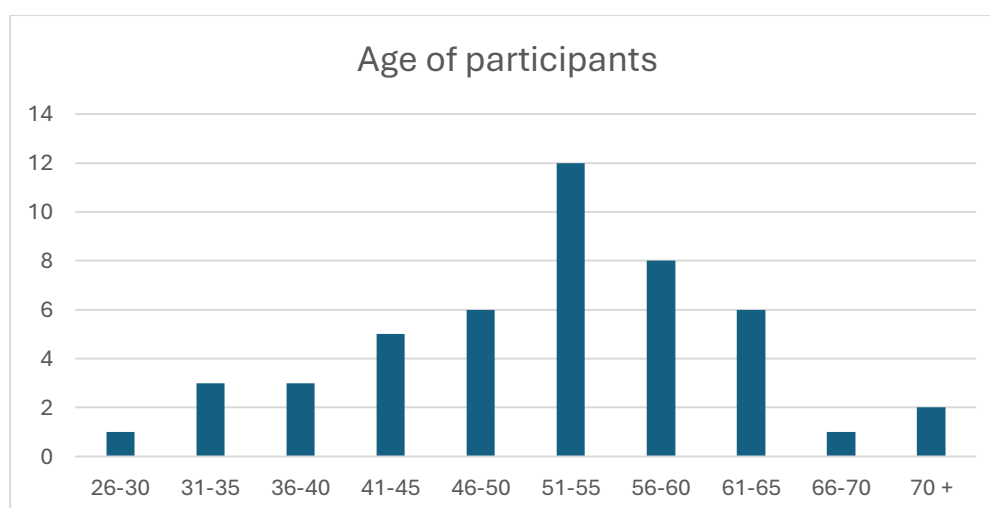
- Of the participants 24 were male and 23 were female. One of the women participants held two doctoral qualifications.
- 45 participants identified as 'White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British'
- 1 participant identified as 'Black, Black British – Caribbean'
- 1 participant identified as 'Any other white background'
- The median age of respondents 51-55. Only 7 of the participants were under 40.

This data lays out extensively the demographic of professionals qualified to level 8 in the fields of CYPF ministry. The research team are pleased to have had such a high response rate which indicates an wide reach across the field. We recognise that there may be a few individuals who have not participated, but also that not everyone would choose to. Like *within* our participants group, there will also be a small community who might be tangentially related by subject but felt that labels of CYPF ministries or school's ministry did not wholly fit with their specialist subject and so chose not to participate. There is not a clear-cut boundary between those within this field and those outside of it, which reflects the often interdisciplinary nature of this work.

We are pleased to see a relatively even gender split within the participants. Out of the 47 participants, 24 identified as male and 23 as female. (However, one of the female participants holds two PhD qualifications, which further closes any gender gap.)

We recognise that there is an overwhelming majority of white participants. This disparity corresponds with similar disparities of ethnicity and race seen at doctoral and postdoctoral levels in academia in the UK. It is also reflected in anecdotal reports from the fields of CYPF ministries, which raises important questions for our fields of ministry about why this is.

The table below depicts the **spread in age** of the 47 participants:



This spread of ages indicates the **need to continue to support younger people in the field** to take level 8 qualifications. This will enable the community of people qualified to this level to be maintained, as a significant proportion of the existing community approach retirement. It also demonstrates the need to **make good use of this existing professional community in supervising and mentoring new level 8 students, before they reach their retirement.**

---

## Doctoral Qualification Pathways

Of the 47 participants, 20% studied full-time and 80% part-time; 45 worked in another job alongside their studentship and 2 did not.

We have looked at the previous qualifications of those who have a doctorate in our field. 22 (46%) have a **related undergraduate qualification** which includes degrees in theology and ministry:

- 6 were from the Institute of Children, Youth and Mission (CYM)
- 4 were from Durham University
- 2 were from Cliff College
- 1 each were from Aberdeen International Christian College, London School of Theology (LST), Nottingham University, Oak Hill, Oasis, Open University, Oxford University, Union, Wheaton, YMCA.

- 1 participant had a related but non-faith-based qualification from Ulster University, 48% with a related qualification altogether.

33 (71%) have a **related postgraduate qualification** which included theology and or ministry:

- 7 from ICYM
- 5 from Durham University
- 4 from Kings College, London
- 2 from Cliff College, Oasis and the University of Wales
- 1 each from the Universities of Birmingham, Chester, Cumbria, Gloucestershire, Newcastle and Oxford, and from Queen's Birmingham, Spurgeon's, Wheaton, YMCA CMS and LST.

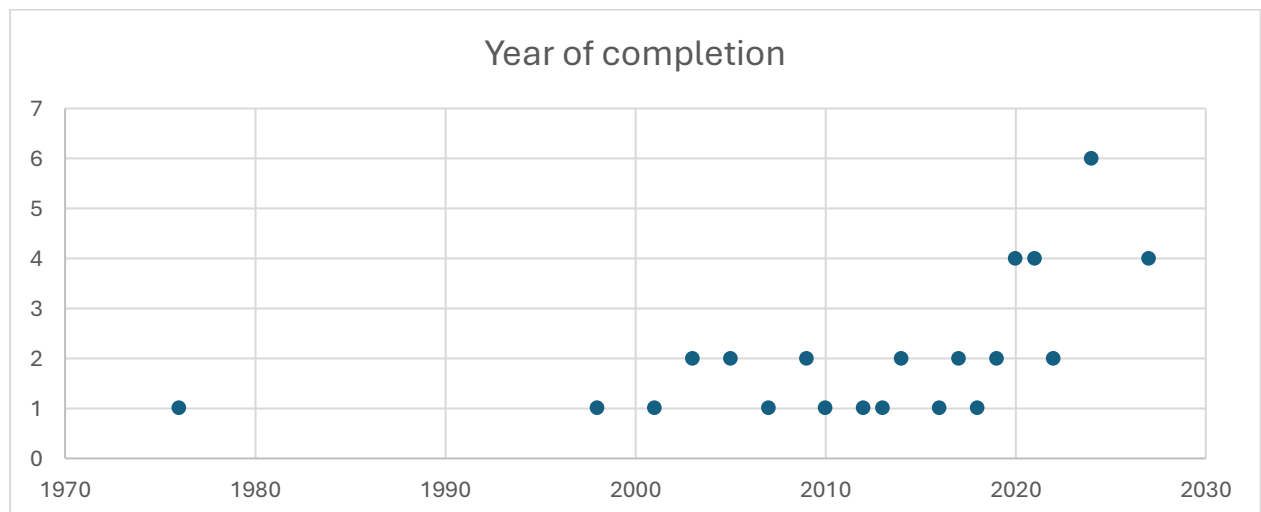
8 have a related, non-faith based, postgraduate qualification:

- 2 from Queen's Belfast and Strathclyde University
- 1 each from Brunel, De Montfort, Dundee and Ulster
- Thus 41 out of the 48 (85%) respondents have a related postgraduate qualification altogether.

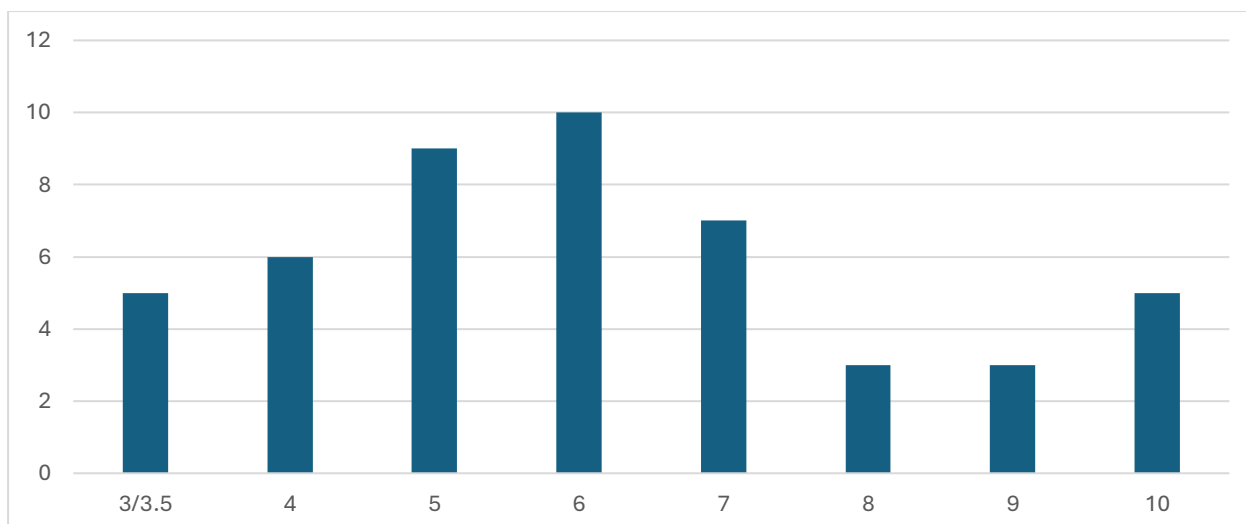
---

## Doctoral Qualification Timelines

The following chart demonstrates the **timeline** of specialists completing their doctoral qualifications:



This chart demonstrates **how long** participants took to complete their doctoral qualifications:



Out of the 47 participants, 11 did their level 8 qualification in 4 or less years. This correlates with the majority of participants studying on a part-time basis. Working alongside study might also be a factor in lengthening the time that students took to complete their qualifications.

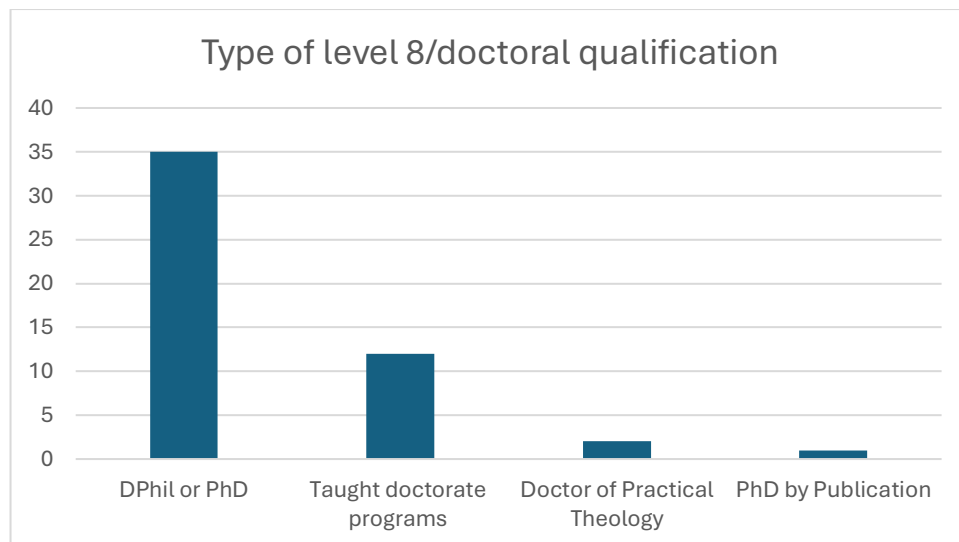
Our data suggests that acquiring such a qualification has tended to be a **long process**. We did not inquire into the time participants took in choosing to apply for a level 8 studentship. Anecdotally, we recognise this is another process that tends to take at least a year.

There would be scope for further analysis into the length of time between participants' first degree and beginning their doctoral qualification. This is also important when looking at the age demographic of those who hold a level 8 qualification. (7 of the 47 participants were under 40, 18 under 50). A relatively high proportion of these participants are in the 50-60 bracket (20), which might indicate that **we are not replacing professionals with this specialism at a fast enough rate for longevity** of teaching undergraduate and postgraduate specialists.

---

## Nature of Level 8 Qualification

Of the 35 who did a **DPhil or PhD**, there were different departmental/subject areas: Theology, divinity, sociology, Biblical Studies, practical theology, sociology of religion, church history, religious studies.



The **institutions** that these participants studied with:

- 6 participants graduated through Durham University (6 participants)
- 5 participants graduated through the University of Manchester 5 (Including 2 associations with Cliff College and 1 with Luther King House)
- 2 participants graduated through Kings College London
- 2 participants graduated through Nottingham University
- 2 participants graduated through Warwick University
- 2 participants graduated through the University of Aberdeen 2 (1 associated with Trinity College Bristol/Bristol Baptist College)

The following universities all had 1 participant who graduated with them:

Brunel University; Cambridge University; City University, London; Queen's University, Belfast; The Open University; Sheffield University; Staffordshire University; Ulster University; University of Chester (associated with Spurgeon's College); University of Birmingham; University of Glasgow; University of Kent; University of Oxford; University of Reading; University of Strathclyde; University of Winchester .

Of the 12 participants who undertook taught doctorate programs there were 8 '**Professional Doctorates**'. The named subject/department of these students were Education, Practical Theology, Theology and Practice. Two of these were 'Doctors of Ministry' programmes.

The **institutions** that these participants studied with are:

- University of Chester (which had 4 participants, including 1 associated with Spurgeon's College)
- Anglia Ruskin University (which had 2 participants associated with the Cambridge Theological Federation)
- Kings College London
- University of Birmingham
- University of Glasgow
- University of Sheffield
- University of West of England

- University of Winchester

Another 1 participant undertook a '**PhD by Publication**'. This was awarded through the University of Staffordshire.

---

## Research Subjects

Of the 47 participants/48 theses there were many areas of inquiry. These are hard to map succinctly in the way that they overlap and focus on different areas. A broad overview of research subjects show that:

- 17 participants overtly focused on **work with young people** for their research (35%)
- 9 participants research the **formation of leaders in the fields of CYPF ministry** (19%)
- 8 participants overtly focused on **work with children** for their research (17%)
- 4 participants overtly focused on **families** for their research (8%)
- 3 participants researched **Sunday Schools** (6%)
- 2 participants overtly focused on **intergenerational work** for their research (4%)

The more specific subject areas of research, or titles that participants gave of their work, are listed at the end of this report. This is a useful for indicating areas of expertise and researched knowledge in the field.

---

## Methodological Approaches

Of the methodologies taken, **85% of participants undertook empirical research** and **15% were literature-based research**. This shows a strong preference for social research in the field.

This survey also demonstrated the wide variety of approaches to social research, which suggests that this community have a strong collective expertise in the breadth of empirical research.

Much of this breadth seems to indicate different ways that researchers have creatively engaged with participants to best represent the participants' voices. The following methodological examples demonstrate this:

- Researchers using visual methods like drawing with children or taking photographs with young people.
- Researchers using diaries and journals in which participants (under or over 18s) could record their own experiences.
- 2 cases of Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodologies to enable young people to co-create the agenda of inquiry.
- 14 participants using a mixed methods approach to their research to explore phenomena from different perspectives.
- 12 students referring to 'case study' or 'ethnographic' research which allows research to work within children, young people and practitioners' lived contexts.

This demonstrates the wealth of experience in, and preference for, **doing research in which theology can engage with practice and people**. The range also demonstrates some expertise in **approaches to transforming ministerial practice**.

A further analysis demonstrates that this community of practice, collectively, have extensive experience in different research approaches. This demonstrates researchers in the fields of CYPF ministries offer **remarkable expertise in research methods to the wider fields of theology, mission and ministry**. Methodological approaches taken within this community include:

- Case studies
  - Ethnographic approaches
  - Grounded theory
  - Participatory Action Research (PAR)
  - Theological Action Research (or TAR)
  - Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (or IPA)
  - Autoethnographic approaches
  - Appreciative Inquiry
  - Questionnaires and surveys, both qualitative and quantitative
  - Analysis of archives and historic data
- 

## Motivation for Doctoral Study

We asked participants why they did their level 8 qualification.

- The most prevalent theme was that **participants had wanted to learn more**. Participants used language around wanting to be ‘stretched’, wanting to develop understanding, and being passionate about the area of their study. For many, this was the reason to undertake the qualification in itself.
- Related to this, participants talked about **responding to a sense of need in their field** for further research, or to be qualified to better support others in the field, or to better resource the work.
- Several participants talked about **career progression**, which included developing practical skills.
- Some participants talked about having been **encouraged by previous tutors** to develop their academic skills or having **encouragement from employing organisations** to progress academically.
- For some of the participants (around 6), the opportunity to take a Level 8 qualification arose at **a good time in their career**. (More participants talked overtly about career progression in the subsequent question).
- A few participants talked about a **sense of vocation/calling** to undertake their doctoral qualification.

These accounts speak of a **highly motivated group** of professionals who are **invested** in their field of ministry, in **good practice**, and in their **personal development**.

We asked participants **why they undertook their qualification at their specific institution**. These are the reasons that they named:

- 21 participants (or 45%) said that they wanted to **work with specific supervisor(s)**, making this the most influential reason to choose an institution.
- 11 participants said that the **location** of their institution was an important factor.
- 8 participants chose an institution because of the **program structure** that was available (with 3 specifically mentioning the 'Professional Doctorate').
- 7 participants cited the institution having a **good reputation or having been recommended**.
- 6 participants chose their institution because they had **previously studied** there for a previous qualification.
- 5 participants studied with their institution because they were **employed** by it.
- 4 participants chose the institution because of their **subject specialism**.
- 2 participants chose their institution because of the **funding** associated with it.
- 2 participants chose their institution on the basis of their **denomination**.
- 1 participant chose their institution because they wanted to **step outside of existing frameworks in their field**.
- 1 participant chose their institution because it offered **part-time/distance** learning.
- 1 participant chose their institution on the basis of **cost**.
- 1 participant chose their institution because it **'felt right at the time'**.

We also asked participants to share **who had influenced their decision** to do a doctoral qualification. These people fell into different groups:

- 32 participants mentioned someone who had had a **teaching or academic role** to them (e.g. BA and MA tutors, headteachers, principals, supervisors).
- 21 participants named **colleagues**, with 10 of these participants citing someone who was in a **supervisory/management role** to them.
- 10 participants named **friends and/or family**, and 10 participants specifically identified their **partner/spouse**.
- 10 participants named someone who was either a **spiritual director or in a ministerial role** to them.
- 9 participants named people who we grouped as **'peers in the field'**.
- 2 participants named **mentors** as having influenced them.

We asked participants who their **wider academic support came from aside from their supervisors**. These people fell into the following groups in our analysis:

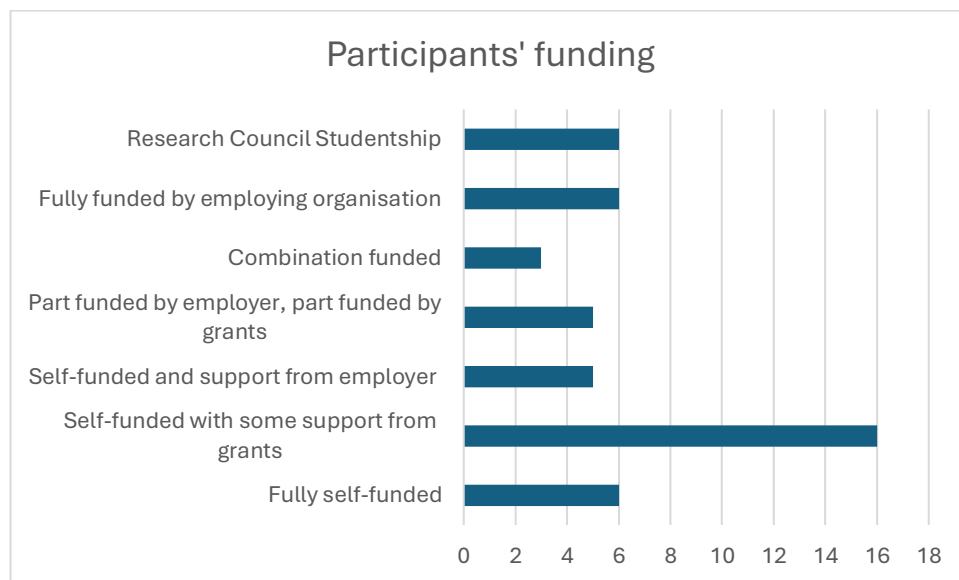
- 26 participants cited peer doctoral students, which included others in taught cohorts, at the same university, or in the same academic associations.  
However, 5 participants mentioned feeling a lack of peer community over the whole or some of their student experience. 1 participant felt that this was because they were both a member of staff as well as a student and another 3 because of the distance learning model. 1 participant felt this was particularly exacerbated for them over covid.

- 7 participants mentioned ‘professional peers’ or colleagues.
- 5 participants mentioned family or friends who had also completed a doctoral qualification.
- 4 participants named specific experts in the field. In some cases, these experts had also encouraged the participants to do their qualification.

Overall these answers indicate the importance of the community of practice within the field in encouraging professionals to take a level 8 qualification and in supporting them to be able to do so.

## Funding availability

The following table indicates how participants funded their doctoral qualification:



The highest category of qualification funding was clearly ‘**self-funded with some support from grants**’. This table is a useful indication of the breakdown in funding, but there are some further metrics needed about what is counted within the cost of funding the qualification. For example, research councils often pay a stipend for living costs, and there is disparity between course costs and levels of income from employment or grants.

A further breakdown suggests that of the 47 participants (with 48 qualifications represented):

- **14** qualifications were **fully funded** in some way
- **32** qualifications **needed some personal funding**, although to differing extents

This initial breakdown demonstrates a community of professionals who are making significant financial investments in order to gain their level 8 qualification.

The grant funders that participants named were:

- Baptist Together Further Study’s Fund

- Bayne Benefaction
- Bible Society
- Christian Educational Trust
- Church House Trust
- Culham Institute
- Denominational funding- Baptists Regional networks, Church of England (or particular CofE dioceses), Church of Ireland
- Keswick Hall Trust
- St Christopher's Trust
- St Luke's Foundation
- WCMET

---

## Enabling/inhibiting factors to doctoral study.

We asked participants questions on **what resources were available** to them which **enabled** them to study at doctoral level. Some participants seemed unsure as to what this meant and did not answer.

Of the participants who did answer, the following useful resources were identified:

- The most frequently mentioned answer was **library access** (37%) closely followed by **finance** (35%).
- **Different types of support from people** were mentioned including family, friends, employer networks, colleagues, peers mainly in a general way with some specifics such as prayer and proofreading.
- **Personal qualities** were identified by some and these included persistence, perseverance, determination, tenacity and resilience with one person mentioning the benefits of coffee and alcohol to get them through!
- 17% of participants mentioned **supervisors** specifically with a similar number citing **IT resources**.
- 2 participants mentioned the **benefits of conferences** and 1 mentioned **specific training**.

We also asked participants if there were aspects of their **personal circumstances which had helped or hindered** them to undertake their doctoral study. There was a breadth of responses but no overarching insights applicable to more than a handful of respondent. The following were mentioned

- **Supportive family, particularly spouses.**
- Having some **flexibility in time planning** including pausing, work roles which facilitated study and spouse doing similar work.
- The **pandemic** giving space to work at home and for one person being furloughed helped significantly.
- Having **savings to self-fund** was a help for one person.

On the **hindering** aspects of **personal circumstances**, there were far more responses in relation to this as compared to what helped:

- 15 participants mentioned **children**, often but not always, young. (More analysis of this could be done in relation to gender).
- For 7 participants, **work pressures** were an issue. Added to this were **job changes** for 2, and **redundancy** for another.
- **Health issues** impacted 5 people and additionally a couple of people had **caring responsibilities**.
- **Finance** was named as a challenge for 4 participants.
- **Dealing with the assumptions of others** and being in a context where she was **groundbreaking** was challenging.
- 1 participant mentioned **getting married**.
- **Imposter syndrome** was mentioned here but also arises in answers to other questions.

We asked participants if there were other **factors which enabled** them to complete their doctoral qualification.

- **Finance** was one, particularly a couple who were fully funded.
- **Spousal income** was also identified as an enabler, as was **not needing to earn** much alongside study.
- **Supportive employers**, particularly in allocation of time and flexible working were mentioned.
- **Access to resources** was identified including the capacity to study remotely.
- **A change of job** was helpful for one person and that study **informed their practice** for another.
- **Encouragement to study** and **easy access to advice and support** was also noted.
- **Experience of teaching and reflecting** seemed helpful to one person.
- **Supportive family and friends** were both mentioned along with **personal qualities** of students which enabled them to engage in doing doctoral level study.

We asked participants if there were other **factors which inhibited** them to complete their doctoral qualification. Again, there are a breadth of responses, most usually mentioned by a small number of respondents:

- The highest number was a **lack of confidence/imposter syndrome** mentioned five times. Along with this was an **unfamiliarity with academic systems**.
- Various dimensions of **feeling unsupported or lonely** emerged including lack of peers in context or no peer support or actively unsupportive peers, a lack of infrastructure where studying (many people study through an institution which is not the validating body), a lack of capacity to engage with other students because of main job, lack of encouragement to publish, and lack of training in skills particularly writing.
- **Health related issues** impacted some, as did **dyslexia**.
- **Time pressures** and knowing what to give up to enable study to be completed was also a concern.
- The **online administration** was inhibiting for one person.

---

## Sharing Doctoral Research

We asked participants what opportunities they had had to **publish academic work or disseminate their research in other ways**.

There seemed to be a **big disparity between participants that worked in ‘mainstream’ or ‘secular’ universities, rather than Theological Education Institutions (TEIs)**. Those who were working in secular/mainstream institutions seemed to be the **most prolific in academic publishing**, with much longer lists of books, book chapters and journals than those in TEIs. Those who worked in TEIs tended to have fewer publications, apart from some individuals in this category. However, this group of participants did recognise their teaching role as a key area for sharing research by way of their students. There then seemed to be **another divide between these TEI practitioners and those who did not work in any academic/teaching role**. This third group seemed to have published less than those working in TEIs.

There would be opportunity for some further analysis on academic publications and how long the doctoral qualification has been completed. It would be expected that there would be some correlation based on how recently a qualification has been finished with opportunities for further publications.

Some participants named factors that they felt **hindered their ability to publish or disseminate their research**. These were:

- Busyness in work
- Not being in the academic community
- Imposter syndrome
- Not being able to afford to go to conferences
- Struggling to find publishers for their subject

Aside from academic publishing, other ways that participants had disseminated their work included:

- 28 participants said they had **shared their research at academic conferences**. The **IASYM** conference was mentioned 6 times.
- 25 participants mentioned **non-academic speaking events**, such as practitioner/church networks. Conferences run by **Youthscape** were mentioned by 4 participants.
- 23 participants said that they were able to share their research through **teaching or training**.
- 11 participants said through **book publications**, and 7 participants included **Grove Book publications**.
- 10 participants said **blogs**.
- 7 participants said **podcasts**.
- 5 participants said **non-academic articles**.
- 1 participant said that they had had a **book tour**.

- 1 participant said that they had had a **photography exhibition**.
- 

## Post-doctoral career development

We asked participants if their doctoral qualification had **led to changes in their careers**.

- 21 participants said that their qualification contributed to their **taking up a new role**. 3 participants specifically mentioned teaching roles, and 3 participants specifically mentioned research roles.
- 5 participants felt that their qualification had **improved their reputation or credibility**.
- 4 participants talked about taking on **increased responsibility in their roles**.
- 2 participants talked about being able to **develop new programmes**.
- Other factors mentioned once were being able to pursue grants; improved work skills; increased confidence; more invitations for public speaking; a small increase in salary.

We asked participants if their doctoral qualification had **had any adverse impact on their circumstances?**

- 4 participants mentioned that they had undergone significant financial instability because of undertaking their further study with some mention of having a long time without a salary. Another participant shared that they had had a decrease in salary having become a freelance worker after receiving their qualification. Another participant specifically mentioned that there was no increase in salary because of their qualification, and another participant shared about how little salaries increased in academic progression in comparison to other careers.
  - 2 participants talked about the negative impact that undertaking their qualification had on health issues or 'burnout'.
  - 2 participants left academia.
  - 1 participant was discouraged by the limited opportunity for publications, which they felt effected little change.
  - 1 participant felt that the increased responsibilities that went with having a PhD had prevented them from being able to develop their own research.
  - 1 participant felt that it was difficult for them to share their research because of its sensitive nature.
  - 1 participant felt that the process had changed how they approached life, and their spouse said that they were 'too analytical'!
- 

## Investing in the next generation of doctoral students:

When asked about supportive roles for future doctoral students:

- **84%** of participants were interested in **mentoring**.
- **67%** of participants were interested in **supervising**.
- **67%** of participants were interested in **external examining**.

At the end of the survey, we asked participants if they wanted to express **any further insights or provide any further information**.

- 8 participants made a note of saying that they felt this survey was a useful or important, with some asking to be kept informed of the outcome of this project or offering support with further research.
  - 1 participant noted the need for research in the digital age for children and young people.
  - 1 participant voiced that they might need training for mentoring, supervision, or examining other level 8 students.
  - 2 participants said that they would be happy to share their experience of supervising and examining.
  - 1 participant shared that they were now less active in the field but would be glad to reengage at this level.
  - 1 practitioner felt that the field needed new approaches to connecting research with practice and disseminating research to practitioners, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church.
- 

## Research Specialisms

Of the participants who undertook level 8 research that was related to the field, their titles were as follows:

- A Visual Ethnographic Study Giving Voice to Baptist Young People and Re-envisioning the Practice of Communion
- Ain't I a Deborah? The womanist perspectives of Black British women leaders and the renewal of Baptist church practices.
- An enquiry into the concept 'readiness for religion'.
- An ethnographic study into the ethics of professional relationships between young people and youth workers.
- An exploration of the notion of 'sense of vocation' among Christian youth workers.
- Becoming Evangelical: Ritual Process and Religious Formation in a Christian Youth Group.
- Betwixt and Between: Professional Identity Formation of Newly Qualified Christian Youth Workers.
- Beyond Awe and Wonder: A study of how teachers understand young children's spiritual development.
- Bible Reading in the Family Context: the relationship between children under the age of 7 and the Bible.
- Building up the Body of Christ through intergenerational Bible study: a qualitative theological study.

- Changing Faith: A Study in Religion, Identity and Change in Young Muslims Encountering Christ within Three Evangelical Youth Ministry Settings in Lebanon.
- Children and Holiness.
- Children's Lives and Deaths in 1 Thessalonians: The Significance of the Presence of Children for Interpreting Context and Text.
- Children's ministry, theology and pedagogy.
- Christian education: exploring a new perspective.
- Church and children's rights: an investigation into the relationship between religious parent/guardian and child dyads from the perspective of children's rights.
- Enabling Family Ministry: An Analysis of Three Church of England Congregations. This research looked into what inhibits and encourages family ministry where family ministry means both working with the biological-legal family and the church family.
- Exploring tensions for Church-based youth workers when talking about LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- Faith in the Gap: Faith formation in emerging adults involved in a one-year internship programme.
- Family faith formation.
- Forming Catholic Identity: contingency, agency and the power of family life.
- From Sunday Schools to Christian Youth Work: Young people's engagement with organised Christianity in the twentieth century and the present day.
- How do youth work students develop their professional values during qualifying education? The thesis explores how youth work students develop their professional values during qualifying education.
- How role-identity sustains Christian youth workers through four seasons of their careers.
- Human Flourishing and the Common Good: The intention and shape of faith-based youth work in the big society.
- If it is Christian, can it be youth work? An examination of the relationship between Christianity and youth work, from the mid 19th century to 2014.
- Incarnational urban youth work.
- Increasing the spiritual development of young people through serving in the church, as designated by a personality test.
- Intergenerational Dialogue with Young People on Spirituality in Churches: A Participatory Case Study.
- Merovingian Episcopal Saints: Text and Portrayal.
- Mimetic Youth Ministry: An autoethnographic Girardian analysis of the subculture of Youth Ministry.
- Paediatric Chaplaincy.
- Perceptions of Catholicity in a plural society: an ethnographic case study of Catholic secondary schools in England.
- Psychological Perspectives on Children's Spirituality.
- Psychological type of those who work with Children and Young People in the Church of Ireland.
- Sacred Space; An exploration into the Distinctiveness of Faith-based Youth. Work from a Christian Perspective in Northern Ireland.
- School Chaplaincy.
- Shame in the church.
- Small Acts: Using theography to locate the youth ministry of one presbytery in the Church of Scotland.

- The \*formation\* of CYP workers/ministers/peer-leaders in community settings outside of the usual church domain, with a particular interest in the interplay between pastoral /journey approaches to ministry contrasted with the outcomes-driven/safeguarding-distance of the increasingly professionalised sector. My interest is in growing local/young (pastoral?) leaders in community/pioneer spaces.
- The Art of Becoming: The Spirit and Whole-Person Learning in Theological Education for Youth Ministry.
- The legacy of Robert Raikes - a comparative study.
- The nature of youth ministry in Northern Ireland through the eyes of local practitioners.
- Trying to be Christian: A qualitative study of young people's participation in two Youth Ministry projects. An argument from a qualitative enquiry that Youth Ministry has a structural task of constructing an 'ecology' of groups and practices within which young people can begin to find ways of engaging in Faith Identity Work, or identity work that leads to faith.
- Understanding Children's Readings of Biblical Narrative: An Investigative Analysis of 11-14 year olds' Readings of the Gospel of Luke.
- Urban Saints: An Interweaving Ecclesiology as a Contribution to the Fresh Expressions Debate.
- Visual ethnographic exploration of the Spirituality of Ukrainian young people.

From this audit we have also produced a separate document which is a directory of specialists in their field.

---

## Recommendations

We are very grateful to the 47 participants who took the time to share their thoughts and valuable insights on their experience of taking a level 8 qualification in the fields of CYPF ministry.

---

## Recommendation 1: To develop a postgraduate community of practice in the fields of CYPF ministry at Ridley Hall.

Our leading recommendation, based on our collated findings, is to recognise the need for developing a 'Community of Practice' for postgraduate research. This will support professionals in the field to take up opportunities to study for level 8 qualifications, and enable the existing community of professionals who have already undertaken this level of qualification, to mentor, supervise, and support them.

We identify this work as essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of training professionals who can support the growth and development of flourishing ministry and mission with children, young people and families. This in turn will make a significant contribution to mission and ministry in the Church of England, to double the number of active disciples among children and young people. The Church has committed significant resource to this end.

We envisage that this 'Community of Practice' will be based at Ridley Hall and work collaboratively with other TEIs and youth ministry networks (e.g. IASYM, Youthscape, other denominational networks), given Ridley's 27 years of CYPF training delivery and staff expertise. This will also continue to build on the good relationships there are with the diocesan advisors network for CYPF ministries, so as to empower local churches and resource dioceses with evidence-based practice. As an Anglican TEI we believe that Ridley Hall is also well positioned to disseminate resources and findings from CYPF ministries to the wider church.

We also recognise that this community as contributing significantly towards theological education more widely, through the wealth of its expertise in practical ministry and empirical research. In this Community of Practice, we will continue to build on our history of conversation between academia and ministerial practice, and champion ongoing transformation in CYPF practice which is evidence-based. This builds on our network of empirical research and reflective practice specialists.

We will give particular attention to recruiting and supporting early career researchers and to making academic pathways more accessible to those from a non-academic background. This will assist the aim of the Church of England to 'grow younger and more diverse'.

We propose that through this work, we will maintain a conversation that enables Common Awards programmes to continue to engage with issues in CYPF ministry, as more across the TEI sector. We recommend that Common Awards considers:

- Providing training in research supervision and mentoring in CYPF ministries.
- Disseminates our directory of professionals across the TEIs which are developing their CYPF work and support.
- Considers representation of CYPF ministries within the Common Awards team.
- Continues to fund and support research in CYPF, with particular connection to growing younger and more diverse agenda.
- Considers that a proportion of yearly Seedcorn calls to research are designated to CYPF ministries (having set a precedent with this first focussed year).

The overwhelming under-representation of GMH specialists qualified at this level in the field calls for further inquiry. This should assess the barriers that there are for potential GMH doctoral candidates, and in particular doctoral candidates within CYPF ministries and how to overcome them. This should include practical recommendations for support structures and pathways that encourage and make available specialist training and roles to GMH candidates.

**This ‘Community of Practice’ would enable us to realise our further recommendations.**

---

## Recommendation 2: To advocate for CYPF Ministry as a valuable field of church ministry and theological inquiry.

This includes work that raises the status of CYPF ministries in conversations across theology, mission and ministry.

This will include continued work to develop and transform practice in CYPF ministries. We will build on research to develop mission and ministry that responds to issues and needs amongst young people with the Church of England in this generation and beyond. It also will support ongoing investment in the field, to ensure highly qualified professionals remain in the field (rather than developing their career elsewhere).

---

## Recommendation 3: To contribute to the debates around safeguarding and good practice in work with children and young people.

This will be essential in ensuring that those working in the Church and other settings can continue to improve the standard of safe and ethical practice with children and young people and learn from mistakes of the past.

---

## Recommendation 4: Promote the ongoing ministry development and formation of such professionals.

This will include raising the standard of practice, supporting postdoctoral supervisors to grow in their mentorship, and encouraging more opportunities for disseminating research so that it can fulfil its impact potential. It might also include collaborative approaches to developing studentship pathways that can provide teaching experience in a TEL.

---

## Recommendation 5: To support the dissemination of innovative research which responds to current issues of mission and ministry with CYPF.

This work will further enable the sharing of resources within the field as well as enable the field to resource important interdisciplinary conversations, such as those between theology and social research, or between policy and practice.

---

## Recommendation 6: Creating structures of support and plausibility to this pathway.

We want professionals to plausibly imagine and work towards taking a level 8 qualification to develop their career and respond to challenges in the field of CYPF ministries. We recommend that there is particularly important work to do to promote a more diverse research community. This is an important question for widening participation in church ministry and theological education.

---

## Recommendation 7: Facilitate the integration of insights from research into the wider theological education context including IME1 and IME2.

We anticipate that this will enable the academic and formational training of ordained and lay leaders in the church to consider the findings of our research. This will ensure that they are given the resources they need to share the good news of the gospel with this current generation.

---

*With particular thanks to the Common Awards team at Durham University for providing us with a Seedcorn Grant to fund this research into CYPF ministries.*