**APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME**

**\* Overview Document \***

In the summer of 2021 St Padarn’s Institute met with key stakeholders to discuss a programme to make it easier for younger people to explore ministry and to that end Mark Griffiths approached the Welsh Government in 2021 to explore setting up a Level 4 Apprenticeship Framework in Church Ministry. The Apprenticeship Framework would help us achieve a range of benefits:

1. Provide extra support for churches in a wide range of ministry functions, from leading youth groups, outreach to local schools, contributing to services to putting the chairs out and distributing the hymn books.
2. Provide a pipeline into ordained ministry. We will ensure denominational vocations advisors have contact with Apprentices during their training. And of course they will enter ministry at BTh Level 5 and can then do Level 5 and Level 6 thus completing a theology degree before ordination/licensing (and potentially the MA if they are asked to stay in theological education for 3 years).
3. If they explore ordination during their Apprenticeship and feel it is not for them, we will still have some highly skilled lay people.

In December 2021 a meeting of Welsh denominations was organised and the plan for Apprenticeships outlined – 25 denominations attended. After outlining the conclusions of the summer gathering, it was clear that all denominations were facing similar issues, and after outlining the potential of a Church Ministry Apprenticeship Framework, there was universal agreement that this would be a good way forward. Alongside the meeting we have also met with several members of the Welsh Government who have all expressed support.

The development of an Apprenticeship Framework meant we would need to create a new educational programme with the University of Wales. This new programme will provide the training context for apprenticeships, the new programme has as its market all Christian denominations throughout Wales.

The process for the development of the Church Ministry Framework is:

* The level 4 apprenticeship is being designed by Coleg Sir Gar and Mark Griffiths (through St Padarn’s Institute) with input from a Steering Group and will be approved by the Welsh Government for funding
* The Apprenticeship will be delivered as part of the CSG’s allocation of the overall Welsh Government Apprenticeship funded places received via the B-WBL Consortium (managed by Pembrokeshire college). CSG is part of the consortium.
* The Apprenticeship Framework will include a Certificate of Higher Education (Level 4 qualification) validated and awarded by the University.
* St Padarn’s will be approved to deliver the Certificate of Higher Education and the University will quality assure the Certificate of Higher Education.
* CSG will provide the apprenticeships oversight, by engaging with the employers and providing the students with the ongoing and regular guidance/support required (through training advisors/assessors).
* CSG will ensure apprentices stay on track to complete the framework within the permitted timeframes.
* CSG will provide B-WBL funding to St Padarn’s for delivery.
* The University will be paid for its services by St Padarns, as per the current Collaborative Provision arrangement with UWTSD.
* If the Apprenticeship Framework is approved by Welsh Government when it comes before them in the late Spring, then it will provide up to £4k in grants to churches who will take on an apprentice. So Apprentices will be be paid £100 a week plus accommodation. This meets the minimum salary requirement for apprentices.
* Local churches and para church organisations will provide the employment and will release the apprentice a day a week to complete their qualification.

This Level 4 qualification is designed to provide the academic, theological, and reflective element to the Church Ministry Apprenticeship. The programme has identified key issues of academic and professional concern relevant to this field. In particular, the programme is designed to develop participants as reflective practitioners. The educational aspect is integrated into a wider programme of formational activities and the development of the skills necessary for Church Ministry.

The process will look like this:

* The Welsh Government will ask for input to a consultation on the apprenticeship programme. After consultation the Welsh Government will be asked to accredit the Framwork.
* The apprenticeship programme will then be promoted throughout Welsh denominations.
* Support and assistance for churches who want to employ an apprentice and help them access Welsh Government funding. Those churches taking on an Apprentice under this system will receive upto £4k from Welsh Government.
* Apprentices will be employed by the church and undertake the activities the church has specified. We can advise on this. But 4 days of working plus 1 study day will be the recommended way forward. With additional time off for residentials that the apprentices must attend.
* St Padarn’s will deliver the Level 4 qualification part of the apprenticeship through a series of residentials and Zoom/Teams training.
* Before the Apprenticeship begins and throughout, advice on vocations will be given by our Vocations advisors as appropriate to the denominational affiliation of the apprentice.
* It is hoped that at the end of training, some of our Apprentices would enter ordination training.

*Mark Griffiths (January 2023)*