

Transforming Church. Together



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL
TRANSFORMING. TOGETHER.

Measuring Impact

Comparing diocesan stats with national figures



Methodology

Statistics are drawn from Stats for Mission 2022 to 2024, and all comparisons are against the National average.

Bristol data drawn from all churches that have received 'strategic' funding from National Church (NCI) and support from the Diocese during that period.

Comparisons are between:

- National Church average (NC)
- Bristol Diocese Total average (BD T)
- BD churches that have received strategic investment (BD FC)



Bristol Diocese churches in scope

Churches involved in:

- Resourcing Churches set up
- Church Plants
- Mission Areas
- Creating new ways of working in the church (Innovation fund)
- TC.T funding, ie: Priority Communities Network (PCN)



Definitions of growth

This report is in response to a recent NCI study that suggested a strong correlation between Strategic investment in contexts, and growth in average weekly attendance (AWA), Worshipping Community, U18s engagement, and other Stats for Mission metrics. As such, we are purely looking at a statistical approach to growth in this report.

Of course, growth can be measured in many ways, and a purely statistical approach cannot be relied upon to show where the Holy Spirit is working, but in this study, we want to keep an apples-to-apples comparison with the NCI numbers.



Results

Comparing diocesan stats with national figures

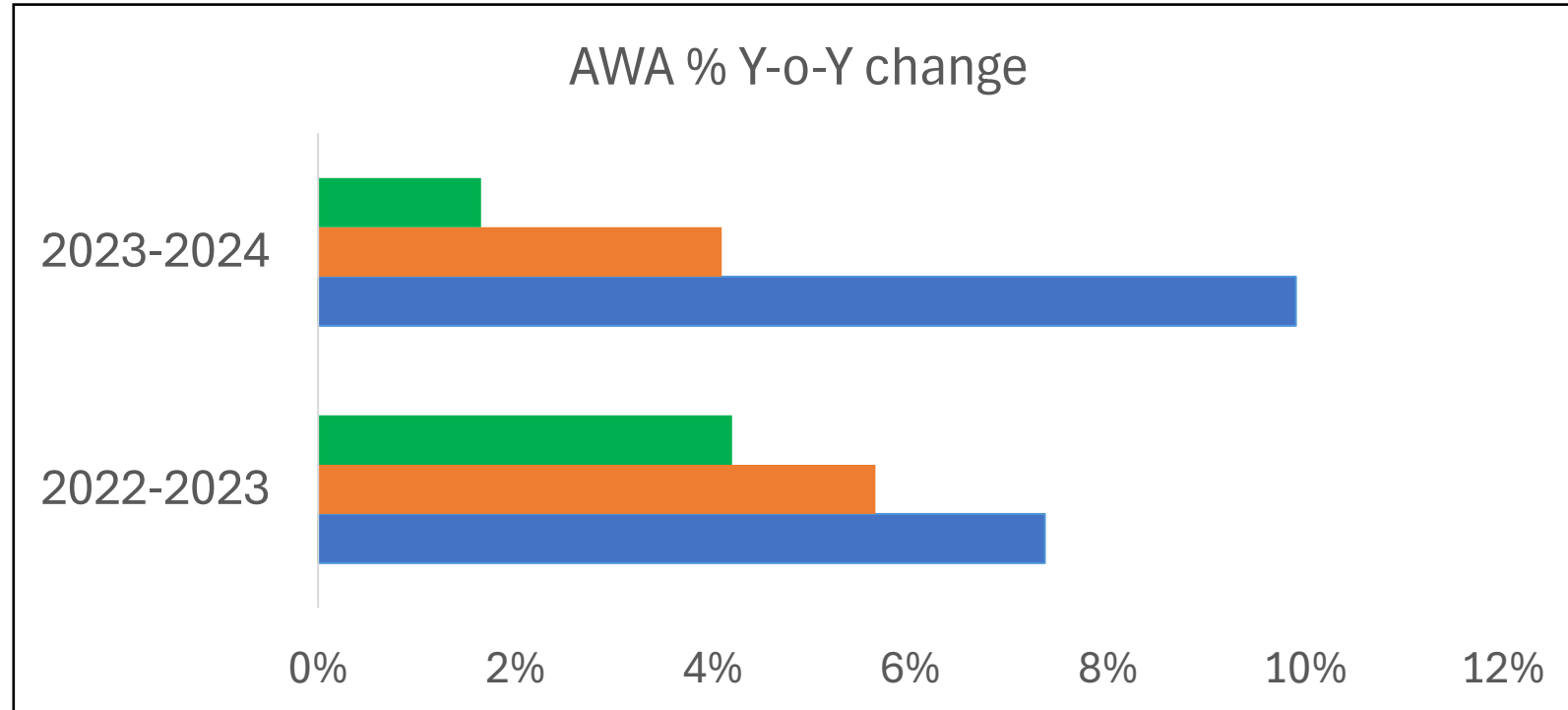


Average Weekly Attendance (AWA)

NC = National Church

BD T = Bristol Diocese total

BD FC = Bristol Diocese
funded churches



Insights

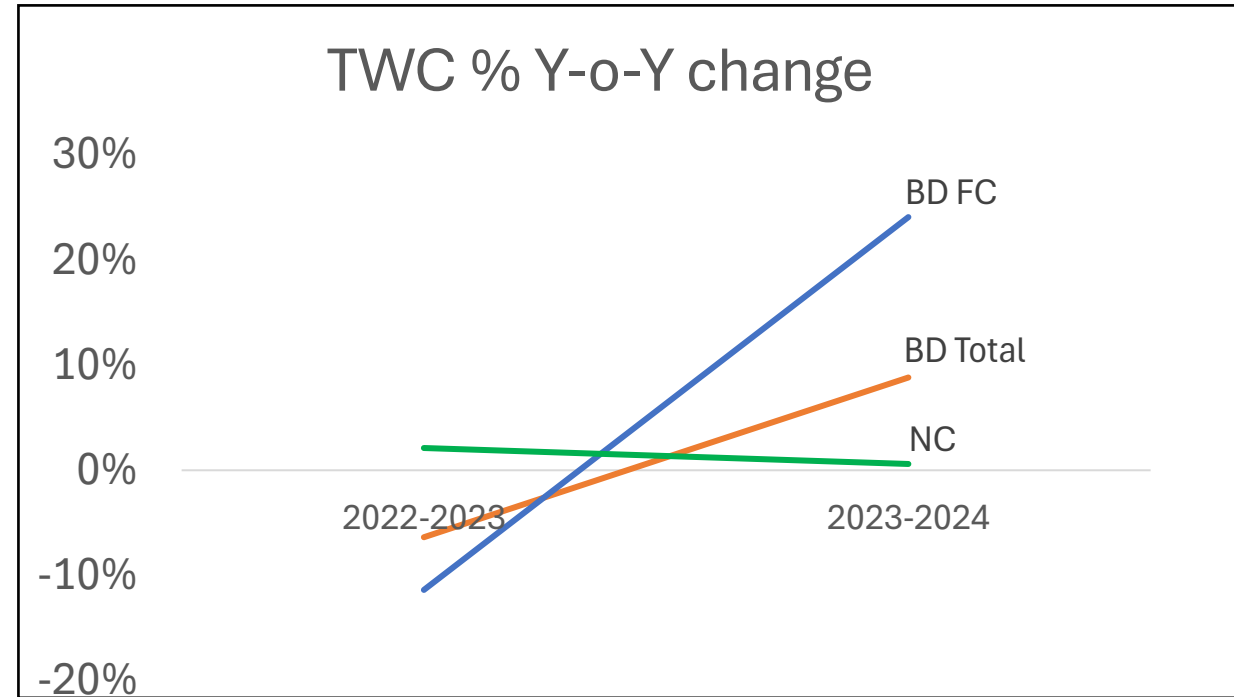
- There is a strong indication of growth in the AWA figures for the Bristol Diocese funded churches from 2022, which is a clear sign of continuous improvement.
- % year-on-year growth (+7% and +10%) is notably faster when compared to the overall diocesan growth (+6%, +4%) and the National church (+4%, +2%).



Total Worshipping Community (TWC)

Insight

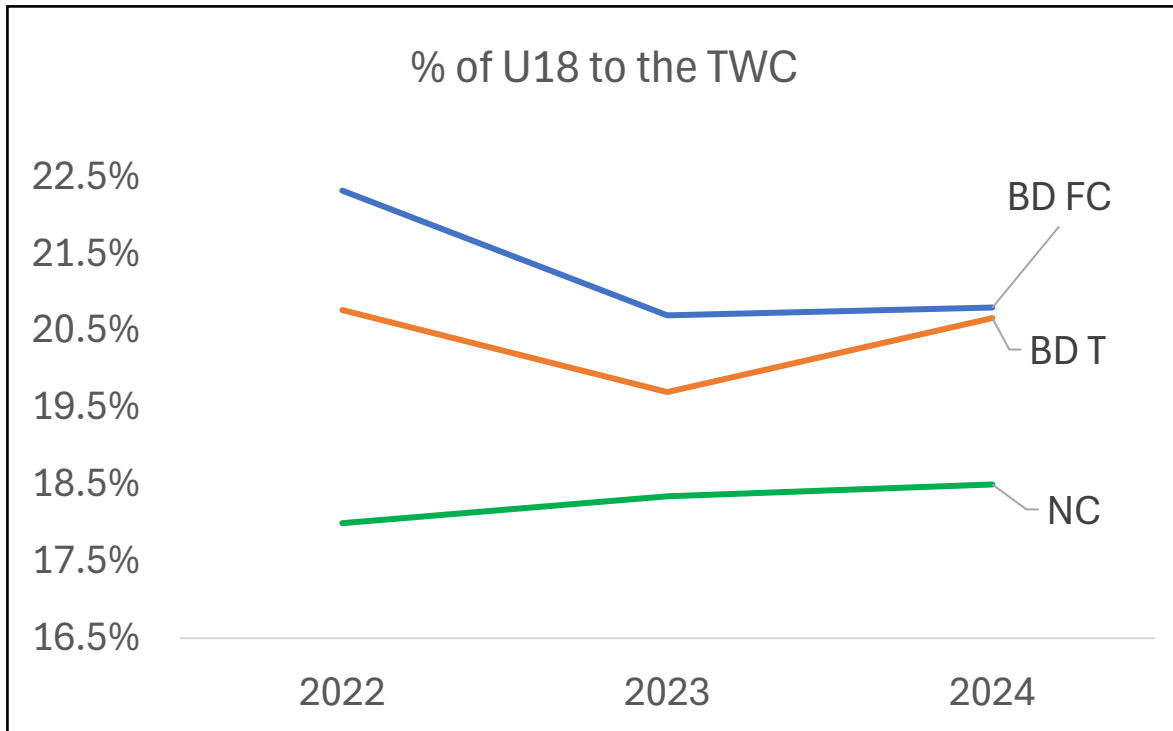
- Whilst the start point was decline in 2023, a strong bounce back in 2024 surpassed 2022 TWC results
- The strong rebound in 2024 reflected in the funded churches (-11%, +24%) and Diocese overall (-6%, +9%) contrasts the stable but slow growth observed in the national figures (+2%, +1%).
- This would suggest that the investment provided had at least some positive impact on the Total Worshipping Community numbers.



- NC** = National church
- BD T** = Bristol Diocese Total
- BD FC** = Bristol Diocese funded churches



Under 18 Worshipping Community (U18 WC)



NC = National church

BD T = Bristol Diocese Total

BD FC = Bristol Diocese funded churches

Insight

- After a dip in youth engagement in 2023, there is a jump in the Bristol Diocese total in 2024.
- Interestingly this jump was not reflected in the funded church numbers, more detailed reflection is needed here.
- This will be addressed in the ongoing Children, Young People & Family Strategy discussions.
- Nationally, the U18 engagement performance is showing slow but steady growth.



Conclusions



Conclusion 1

Based on this data review, there is a clear correlation between the input of Diocesan focus with strategic funding, and the statistical measures of growth in the contexts involved.

We recognise, however, that TC.T is about more than statistical growth, taking an holistic approach to church transformation.

This review shows encouraging signs that working together to follow God's call to change can have a positive impact, and that an openness to appropriate investment in our contexts can help us to meet the needs of our communities in a changing world.



Conclusion 2

Lessons that can be drawn from the data:

1. It isn't all about money. Even focussing on a context (or group of contexts) can result in a changed dynamic, without or before funding.
2. It is about sustainability. We need to avoid circumstances where the ramp down of funding or attention leads to a stop in activity.
3. It is not about tradition. There are examples of a wide range of traditions reflected in this data. Transformation is open to all contexts.

