

Recruitment Guidance

Human Resources Toolkit

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Our Vision Prayer

Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses, to grow leaders and inspire children and young people. Give us eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

Introduction

Welcome to the Blackburn Diocese Human Resources Toolkit. The purpose of the toolkit is to guide you through typical aspects of the employee life cycle. This guidance should be used in conjunction with the downloadable templates which you can request for free from the diocesan HR team.

This section covers **recruitment**. Whether you are recruiting for the first time, or have years of experience, this toolkit will help ensure that you recruit **safely, legally**, and following **best practice** with confidence.

If you need further assistance with the recruitment process, please contact the diocesan HR team.

Key First Steps

So, you have decided you would like to recruit? There are some important first steps that should be taken before you start finding suitable candidates:

- As the employer, it is recommended that the PCC holds a meeting where the minutes are recorded and an agreement to employ has been signed. Within this meeting, it can be agreed who the lead recruiter is and who will be part of the selection panel.
- Are you the lead recruiter, or have you established who the lead recruiter is going to be? It is important to select a lead recruiter to maintain a consistent approach to the recruitment process. This person will be responsible for overseeing each stage of the recruitment process and for keeping the rest of the selection panel informed throughout. It is crucial that the lead recruiter has completed the **'Safer Recruitment'** training and follows the guidance provided by the Church of England:
<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>
- Think about who should be involved on the selection panel for the role you are recruiting for. This should be a small group of relevant people that are willing to partake in both the short-listing and the interviews. For example, the employee's line manager should be present.
- Employment Status: you need to ensure that you are adhering to the criteria that determines that somebody is an employee. Follow these useful links to guide you:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employed-or-self-employed>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-employment-status-for-tax>

Producing a Job Description

- It is recommended that the job description is eye-catching, clear and concise so that potential applicants know exactly what it is that you are looking for. For example, providing an overview of key details at the top of the description is a great way to start: job title, salary, hours and location.
- Following this, including an introduction/background to the role is useful to enable applicants to picture the context of the role and whether they align with the employer values, vision and aims.
- It is important to consider the main duties and responsibilities the employee will have. Where possible, try to ensure short sentences are used when listing these.
- You will need to produce a person specification outlining any qualifications, skills and experience that are either essential or desirable in performing the duties listed. This section is crucial for short-listing and interviewing later down the line. Please see p7 for further guidance on person specifications.
- Finishing the job description with an outline of the main contractual terms and conditions is important so that there are no surprises for the successful candidate when they become employed. For example, probationary period, notice period, annual leave, pension, benefits, right to work and DBS checks (where applicable). If it is determined that a role has a DBS requirement, you will also need to make sure applicants complete a '**confidential declaration**' alongside their application.

A downloadable job description template is available for you to use for free. Please contact the diocesan HR team to gain access to the recruitment pack.

Producing a Job Description

Person Specification and Requirements for the Role

It is really important that the person specification is put together carefully to make sure that no discrimination occurs. Only list something as essential if it is a **genuine requirement** needed to carry out the role. For example, a financial role may require a specific qualification such as an AAT certification. Or, a ministry role is likely to require somebody who is ordained. Any criteria that would be nice to have but is not essential should be listed as a desirable. It is recommended that you add where each criteria will be evidenced in the person specification table; ‘application’, ‘interview’, and ‘reference’. This will be helpful when short-listing and interviewing.

When including education requirements, remember that not everyone seeking employment has been educated in England. Therefore, it is recommended to include ‘or equivalent qualifications/experience’ when asking for evidence of GCSE’s, A-Levels or a degree.

Can you specifically ask that an employee is Christian? - the short answer is yes! However, be careful! Whilst in many cases being a Christian is considered an occupational requirement in line with the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010, this is not always the case just because the role falls within a church setting. For instance, look at the duties and responsibilities listed in your job description and ask yourself if being a Christian really is essential to carry out the role?

Where you have determined having an active Christian faith is not essential, it is still essential that the future employee shares the same vision and aims as the organisation. Therefore, it would be wise to include something like “must have sympathy with the Christian faith and the ethos of the Church of England”.

A downloadable job description template is available for you to use for free. Please contact the diocesan HR team to gain access to the recruitment pack.

Producing a Job Description

Statutory Minimum Requirements

There are some statutory minimum requirements that you must meet to ensure that you are employing legally:

National Minimum Wage - Anyone above school leaving age is eligible to get the National Minimum Wage. Anyone above the age of 21 should get the National Living Wage. The current rates are £12.21 for anyone aged 21 and over, £10.00 for ages 18-20, £7.55 for under 18. These usually update each April, please see <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>. Ensure when selecting a salary these minimum requirements are met, however the salary should reflect the duties and responsibilities of the role. We recommend you bench mark against similar roles being advertised in your area.

Holiday Entitlement - The statutory entitlement is 5.6 weeks which equates to 28 days and includes the statutory public holidays (8 days a year in England). You may wish to provide more than this. Please see <https://www.gov.uk/holiday-entitlement-rights>

Pension - All employers must offer a workplace pension scheme by law and automatically enroll eligible employees. The minimum employer contribution is 3% with the employee paying 5%. Please see <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-pensions/joining-a-workplace-pension>

Where to Advertise

Now your job description is ready, you may be wondering how and where to advertise your role to reach a wide audience. Think about whether you would like to simply advertise the job description alone, or for some roles a catchy poster highlighting key information may draw in the attention of the right candidate. There are a few different options you could take:

- You are welcome to advertise on the diocesan website free of charge. To do this, please contact the HR team with your job description, closing date and proposed interview date. The HR team will review and upload this for you. If we write back with any edits or suggestions, please don't see this as a bad thing. We just want to ensure that we remain legally compliant.
- Post the job on your own parish website, there will likely be people in your community that are seeking appropriate employment.
- Utilise your church noticeboards and any noticeboards within the community that may be happy to pin up your advert.
- Depending on the role, you may want to consider posting externally. This could be through recruitment sites such as Pathways, Charity Job, Indeed etc. Or, the Church Times.

How long should an advert be live? There is no specific requirement for how long you should advertise for. However, we do recommend advertising between two weeks to one month where possible.

A downloadable job application form is available for you to use for free. Please contact the diocesan HR team to gain access to the recruitment pack.



Short-listing

Hopefully by now you have received applications for your role. The selection panel will need to determine which candidates will be invited to attend an interview.

- To do this fairly, we recommend using a short-listing matrix to score each candidate against the person specification criteria you produced earlier when making the job description. You should include the essentials and desirables that you originally marked as to be evidenced in the ‘application’.
- It is wise to also include your reasoning for the scores in case any applicants ask for feedback. This also helps panel members ensure there is no discrimination present.
- Hold a short-listing meeting with the panel to discuss individual scoring. Once scores are collated, you can select who to invite to the interview. It is important that you let candidates know the outcome either way.

A downloadable short-listing matrix template is available for you to use for free. Please contact the diocesan HR team to gain access to the recruitment pack.



Interviews

Preparation

When conducting interviews there are different areas the panel will need to cover to find out as much as they can about the candidates.

- For some roles, it may be necessary to ask candidates to prepare a short (10 minute) presentation in advance. This can be presented to the panel before the interview begins. Or, if a presentation is inappropriate for the role, candidates could be asked to complete an exercise. For example, completing a task on Excel or Word could be a key indicator of someone's ability to perform specific duties. Each candidate should be asked to complete the same task. Do ensure to ask candidates in advance of the interview if they require any reasonable adjustments (this could be accessibility or even extra time).
- Interview questions should be agreed with the panel in advance and each candidate should be asked the same questions. This way, discrimination is prevented and candidates can be clearly scored against each other. The scoring process should be conducted in a similar way to the short-listing. Anything from the person specification that was listed as evidenced in 'interview' should be included in some way.
- When selecting interview questions, keep in mind that you are not allowed to ask questions that may discriminate. For example, asking about candidate's personal lives or 'protected characteristics'.
- It is recommended that the interview section itself lasts between 45 minutes- 1 hour + time for the presentation/task and for the candidate to ask any questions they may have for the panel.

A downloadable interview question bank is available for you to use for free. Please contact the diocesan HR team to gain access to the recruitment pack.

Interviews

Interview Day

The set-up of the interviews is important to get the best out of your candidates. The following should be considered:

- **Location** - are the interviews being held in a quiet location where you are unlikely to be disturbed?
- **Layout** - carefully consider where the panel and the candidate will sit. It is recommended that the candidate feels comfortable and will be able to clearly see and hear the panel members.
- **Refreshments** - make sure to provide the candidate with water. They are going to be doing lots of talking and water can help with a dry mouth and calm nerves.
- **Reasonable adjustments** - if a candidate requires any reasonable adjustments make sure these are clearly accommodated to.
- **Schedule** - if you are interviewing multiple candidates in a day, give yourself a break between candidates and some time at the end of the day to make your decision.
- **Decision** - once you determined a successful candidate or if you would like to go back out to advert, it is best practice to let all candidates know the outcome of their interview as soon as practically possible.

A downloadable interview schedule example is available for you to use for free. Please contact the diocesan HR team to gain access to the recruitment pack.



Pre-employment checks

Congratulations! You are in a position to offer somebody a role.

Whilst this is incredibly exciting and you may want to have this person start straight away, there are a number of checks that must be completed before their first day of employment to comply with safer recruitment. This step is often overlooked by employers and it can cause multiple problems and even legal issues later down the line.

- **Right to work** - You must check that job applicants are allowed to work in the UK before you employ them. (You can be fined up to £20,000 if you cannot show evidence that you checked an employee's right to work in the UK). For example, you can check a passport in person and photocopy this. If the person is not from the UK, you should ask for a 'share code' as well as their ID documents. For further guidance, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work>
- **DBS (where applicable)** - If the role requires the employee to work with children and/or vulnerable adults, a DBS check must be conducted. You need to see the outcome of this prior to commencement of employment. Please see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers>
- **References** - You should contact the referees provided by the candidate to check suitability for the role they applied to. Make sure that you get permission from the candidate prior to asking for the reference. In many circumstances, a referee is their current employer and you should provide them with the opportunity to inform them before you make contact. Please refer to section 8 of the CoE Safer Recruitment guidance for specific requirements for obtaining a reference: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/section-8-pre-appointment-checks>
- **Contract of Employment** - Providing the new employee with a Contract of Employment prior to their start date is best practice. This ensures they agree with the terms and conditions before their first day.

A downloadable reference request form and a Contract of Employment checklist is available for you to use for free. Please contact the diocesan HR team to gain access to the recruitment pack.

Additional Links

ACAS Recruitment: <https://www.acas.org.uk/hiring-someone>

Church of England Safer Recruitment: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance>

Equality Act 2010: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

National Minimum Wage Act 1998: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage>

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rehabilitation-periods>

Further Guidance in the HR Toolkit:

Employment Guidance

Line Management Guidance (*coming soon*)