



Employ a youth / children and families worker

When recruiting a paid youth / children and families worker there are some useful stages to think about. After your church has prayerfully explored the possibilities including funding, you will be in a stronger position to know if your church is able to proceed.

Sometimes employing a worker will not be the answer, as it can create more work, especially for the person tasked with line managing them and it will require more input from volunteers not less. Some churches believe it will solve all of their youth / children's ministry woes. For some churches it has been a very positive experience that has enriched and grown their youth / children's ministry beyond expectations. However, for some churches it has been a disaster and destroyed their youth / children's ministry and often taken its toll on the worker too. Either way, employing a youth / children and families worker must not be entered into lightly. It must be done with:

- Considerable prayer
- Careful consideration
- A clear or developing vision and strategy for the youth / children's ministry in the church
- Realistic expectation and clear aims
- A sound funding strategy
- A clear management structure with ongoing support for the worker
- A proper selection and recruitment process (including safe recruitment)

This document is designed to act as a helpful guide and check list. When employing a youth / children and families worker we strongly advise the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to always seek professional Human Resources (HR) advice, especially in relation to contracts.

Considerable prayer

Have an initial meeting to seek vision, to pray and explore requirements. This may take more than one meeting. It may be useful to seek the advice of your Go Team Adviser or an external facilitator. This time should not be rushed and it may take longer than you think.

Careful consideration

Explore different options and possibilities for the appointment of a worker:

- Full-time / part-time / sessional / project worker
- Taking on a trainee / student / gap year option
- Job share options

It is important to seek advice at this point. Speak with churches that have already or are in the process of employing a worker and consider visiting other places to talk with both workers and employers.

Consider discussing it with the children / young people (and the parents) in your parish to find out what they think or might want. If there is a school in your parish, you could discuss it with them as most youth / children and families workers have input into their local school/s.

Don't rush this part of the process, it is better to see what is possible or is working well elsewhere, so that it can help to inform your needs, wants, vision and strategy moving forward.

A clear or developing vision and strategy for the youth / children's ministry in the church

It is vital to have a clear vision for the youth / children's ministry in the church as this will help to shape your expectations. It will also offer the worker a clear framework and set of aims to work to. Allow for some flexibility as the worker may bring with them particular gifts or skills that could enhance your youth / children and families ministry and add to the churches vision.

Realistic expectation and clear aims

- Draw up a DRAFT 'wish list' and person specification based upon your needs as this will be helpful in shaping a final job description and person specification
- Finalise the job description and person specification (the Go Team can help with this)
- Prepare an employment contract in line with the JD (seek professional HR advice)
- Agree an appropriate management and supervision structure and set up a local support group to provide ongoing support, encouragement, advice and advocacy for the worker

A sound funding strategy

The PCC must draw up a funding strategy and budget for the duration of the post. This will include:

- Salary costs (or salary package)
- Employment costs, National Insurance, pension and insurances
- Work related expenses
- A working budget
- Selection and recruitment costs
- How the funding is going to be obtained and maintained

The Go Team Advisers can help with drawing up a funding strategy.

A clear management structure with ongoing support for the worker

This will give the worker confidence in their employer and line manager and will strengthen accountability, efficiency and outcomes. It will also offer a safety net for both the employer and employee. The PCC or other main governing body is responsible for:

- Selection and recruitment
- Safe recruitment by making sure all relevant checks have been carried out.
- The worker's job description and any changes
- An appropriate induction (and exit)
- Ensuring line management is in place
- Issuing a contract of employment
- Pay and conditions
- Liabilities and insurances
- Employment contracts and contractual arrangements
- Offer and termination of employment
- Policies and procedures

Regular line management / supervision will help the worker to shape and develop their work, in line with their job description, expectations and the churches vision for the youth / children's ministry. The Line Manager is responsible for:

- Regular supervision meetings to help the worker to reflect and evaluate their work, celebrate what is going well, set goals and monitor targets and deal with any problems or concerns
- Being a sounding board for new ideas and initiatives
- Offering encouragement and prayer when things are not going so well
- Making sure effective channels of communication are in place
- Being an advocate for the worker with the PCC and other stakeholders
- Ensuring the worker has the resources and budget to carry out their work effectively
- Discussing any changes to job description
- Identifying any Continual Professional Development (CPD) needs
- Agreeing / signing off expenses, time off and other leave
- Carrying out appraisals
- Carrying out requests on behalf of the PCC

On going support will show that the employer and the church care for the worker, their well being and the developments in the youth / children's ministry. This may include additional pastoral, spiritual and prayer support when required.

A proper selection and recruitment process (including safe recruitment)

Set out your selection and recruitment dates and a timeframe including:

- Expected start date for the post
- Where and when to advertise the post
- Closing date for applicants – plus how you will treat late enquiries or submissions
- Shortlisting date and how you will inform the candidates
- Interview date
- Format of interview and who will be involved
- When you will take up references (before or after interview)
- If you will be offering reasonable expenses and accommodation for interview if required

You should then be able to draw up the advert and put together an employment pack for prospective candidates. The pack might include:

- A covering letter
- The vision and aim for the post
- Dates of the interviews and time scale of employment
- The job description and person specification
- A parish profile of the youth / children's ministry
- An application form
- Any other information that could be useful (avoid too much)

Implement your selection and recruitment process (as above). After you have shortlisted, send a letter inviting candidates to an interview. Include dates, times and venue and what you expect of them at the interview, e.g. a presentation. At this point, you can determine if candidates will require accommodation / hospitality. You can take up references at this stage or this can be done after the candidate is chosen.

Interviewing and employing the worker

- Agree the interview process including who will be involved and questions to ask candidates
- Conduct interviews and inform candidate/s of the outcome
- Take up references if you have not already done so
- Conduct the safe recruitment process and relevant employment checks
- Formally offer the successful candidate the post by letter (if all is well and in place)
- Agree start date and request for any required personal details
- Issue the contract of employment (including the agreed probationary time)
- Conduct the start day and implement the induction process
- Implement management structures and ongoing support for the work and worker
- Review the post in relation to any probationary agreements
- Have an appraisal system in place to review annually work and worker

The Go Team Advisers can help with the employment offering basic guidance and some draft sample paperwork. We are not HR experts, so it is important that you seek some professional HR advice. We are also happy to be involved with interviews however, you must remember it is your appointment not ours.

For any further advice or help, contact your Archdeaconry based Go Team Adviser:

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/children-young-people/>