

## Employing Ministers for Children, Young People and Families.

### Introduction

Ministry with children, young people and families is at the heart of the life and mission for Parishes across the Diocese. Around ten percent of parishes are able to further support this ministry through employing a designated Minister. These roles are fruitful in providing leadership, growing connections and relationships, bringing training and experience, and providing a focus for faith formation, spiritual nurture and missional activity. Given the investment in time, energy and money that these roles represent it is worth the time and attention to making, and supporting, good appointments.

This document is for parishes, benefices and deaneries who are considering creating an employed role to lead and support ministry with children, young people and families. It is designed to accompany the full guidance contained in the [Parish Toolkit](#) from the Human Resources and Safeguarding Team. This document focusses on some useful specifics around the employment of a Children, Young People and/or Family Minister.

**The Discipleship Enabler Team** are also a useful resource, and we highly recommend getting in touch at the earliest opportunity so we can assist you through the process.

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### To note:

Over the last few years cuts in higher education funding, the fragility of some of these roles, and an emphasis on recruiting younger ordinands has meant there are fewer applicants. It is therefore all the more important to invest energy in the process, the post and the pitch.

### Spiritual Process

Listen. Pray. Discern. Listen to adults and children in the church and wider community. Listen to God to discern where focus and vision should be. Through a process of listening widely, notice and discern what the particular needs are and how the role might bring resources, changes or developments to these.

Think, talk through and agree vision and values.

### Vision for Employment

The first step in employing a children, young people or family minister is to capture and articulate the vision – a vision that is shared and owned by the congregation and the partners involved.

The vision flows from listening and discerning:

Where are the opportunities that we are seeing? What are we building on? What are the needs we are perceiving? Where is God at work? What do we believe we are being called to that a worker could help us with? What are children, young people and families telling us and how can we respond?

Without a clear vision the recruitment process is confused and there can be many different ideas and expectations of what the worker should be doing (regardless of how possible this is) and a growing critical frustration if they are not. This can ultimately lead to the failure of the project.

Furthermore, the vision clarifies the skills and experience needed in the minister.

### **Values**

At the outset it is good to step back and ask what does it mean to be a Christian employer? How is the process, the package and the planning good for the minister, the church, good for the ministry we are enabling, and good for the children/young people/families and community?

Is the recruitment process well organised and fair as we seek to fill this key ministry role and support someone in this new position?

### **Three potential pitfalls**

1. Unrealistic expectations: The listening, vision and values help to put together a role that gives guidance but is not a straitjacket and frames the role realistically rather than being an undo-able wish list.
2. When theology doesn't match: Paying attention to the Churchmanship and spirituality of the employing church is critical. Will the appointed minister fit and be comfortable within the ministry team and church environment?
3. Finance: Is the funding in place to be able to appoint to the role? Has thought been given to sustaining the role? A note too that there are costs beyond salary to be borne in mind such as pension, expenses, professional development and equipment.

### **Three things that will help the role**

1. Ministerial Code of Conduct – Guidelines on the expectations of appropriate and professional conduct in such a role can be a useful benchmark. Although ministers in these roles are not usually clergy, [the clergy code of conduct](#) is a useful starting point.
2. Parish commitment to the spiritual formation AND continuing development of the minister.
3. Enabling time and space to join Diocesan Support & Networks

### **Logistics**

Pay scales: Is a fair rate of pay being offered? Many roles advertise a salary scale depending on experience but has thought been given to the training and/or experience that trigger a move up the scale?

## **Recruitment**

Investing time and energy in this will pay off.

Does the advert communicate honestly the church and vision for the role? In our experience it can be useful in the advert to encourage people to contact one key person for an informal chat.

Is the recruitment and interview process good and robust? Will the candidates have a good experience of the church through this process?

How will children, young people, families and/or the local school actively participate in the interview process? Their experience, perceptions and insight in this process are of huge importance.

## **Deployment**

Good line management is key in the success of these roles, as is a good annual review process. This thinking ahead to how the role will be managed and supported is key.

How are the congregation/community involved and informed?

Ongoing support, development and nurture.

This book is an excellent resource, and provides a fuller guide

[www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9780715140581/employing-youth-and-childrens-workers](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9780715140581/employing-youth-and-childrens-workers)

## Supplemental:

### Employment Process

#### Spiritual Process

- Listen. Pray. Discern.
- Think, talk through and agree vision and values.
- Begin to shape the role

#### Getting the whole community on board.

- Vision/ priorities / opportunities/ needs/ managing expectations
- Fundraising all costs (employment/ budget/ expenses)
- Accountability structures
- Volunteers & co-workers
- Local school & other partners

#### Employment Details

- Human resources processes & employment law
- Contract of employment
- Ministerial code of conduct
- Genuine Occupational Requirement & Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Operating policies
- Finance - wages plus on costs/ paying fairly / pay scales at recruitment and increasing over time
- Logistics of having a staff member – desk/office space, storage, of equipment
- Line management and supervision – who, how frequently
- Training & continuing professional development
- Spiritual formation
- Diocesan & other network retreat and learning opportunities

#### Recruitment

- Advert, job description (providing a mini 'Parish Profile').
- Application process
- Short listing
- Interview involving children, young people and families plus the school
- Accepting or rejecting candidates

#### Induction & getting the worker started

- Induction programme - First day, week, month, three months - meeting key people
- Probation period
- Setting expectations and early priorities
- Line management
- Meeting Diocesan staff & support structures