

Recruitment and Selection

Before starting any recruitment process first determine whether there is a genuine need to fill the role. Consider whether the vacancy can be addressed internally by offering promotions, job rotations, or upskilling existing employees. Internal opportunities not only encourage staff retention but also save time and resources associated with external recruitment.

If an internal solution is not suitable, these are the steps we recommend for the recruitment process.

Preparing for recruitment

Create a clear and concise job description and person specification, a template is available in the templates on the website. The job description should outline the key responsibilities, duties, and expectations for the role, while the person specification should list the required skills, qualifications, and experience. Ensure these documents are inclusive and avoid unnecessary criteria that could discourage diverse applicants.

Avoiding Discrimination

Religion and belief is a protected characteristic in the UK. This means there must be a genuine occupational requirement to specify someone must be of a particular religion or belief. In parish roles this will likely be roles which take an active part in mission and ministry, roles such as administrators or cleaner are unlikely to meet this criteria.

You should avoid language that could unintentionally exclude or deter applicants. For example, terms like “young and dynamic” could discourage older candidates, while unnecessary criteria, such as requiring specific qualifications unrelated to the role, may disadvantage certain groups.

Ensure all criteria are directly relevant to the role and focus on the skills and experience needed to perform the job.

Advertising

You may be able to fill many of the roles in your parish by word-of-mouth and parish notices and while this can be a fast and effective method you run the risk of not finding the best candidate for the job and leaving yourself open to claims of discrimination.

Advertising effectively ensures you reach the right candidates and provide equal opportunities for all applicants. To achieve this, roles should be advertised widely using a combination of channels that suit the position's requirements.

There are many options for advertising vacancies.

Free advertising:

- **Online Job Boards**, Indeed and LinkedIn allow for free advertising. They will encourage you to 'boost' your advert by paying.
 - Indeed: uk.indeed.com
 - LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com
- **Government website**, such as the **Find a Job** service provided by Jobcentre Plus, which allows employers to post vacancies for free and reach job seekers across the UK.
 - Find a job: <https://findajob.dwp.gov.uk/employer>
- **Social media**, such as Facebook or other platforms where you and the parish are active. You may also consider posts on community groups on these platforms.
- **Community Platforms**, such as local noticeboards.

Paid advertising:

- **Online Job Boards**, including platforms like TotalJobs or Reed, require you to pay to advertise, costs range from £90 - £250 per advert.
 - TotalJobs: www.totaljobs.com
 - Reed: www.reed.co.uk
- **Church of England website**, the Church provides a one-off service for advertising jobs in their own job board, Pathways.as the primary platform for job postings. At the time of writing this was £150 per advert.
 - [Pathways – one-off support](#)
- **Local Media**, such as local newspapers or job boards.
- **Recruitment Agencies**, this is the highest cost option and is normally better suited to roles requiring specific expertise or seniority.

When preparing the advert, ensure it reflects the job description and person specification. Clearly outline the responsibilities, skills, and experience required, as well as details about the organization and any benefits.

Application Process

Decide how you would like to receive applications. There are different options, you may choose to ask candidate to provide a CV and covering letter, complete an application form or apply online.

If you choose to use a job board including the Church of England job board then applications can be received within those systems and the offer options for communicating with candidates.

You may want to choose to use an application form, if you do this then you should ensure that it can be completed electronically, which means it is more accessible to people with disabilities.

You will also need to consider how you are going to receive the applications, if you use a job board then they will be securely held within their system. However, if you ask for applications to be emailed you will need to publicly advertise an email address and may want to consider a generic recruitment@parishname. You also need to ensure that you are securely storing personal information.

Shortlist candidates

The shortlisting process is a critical step in ensuring that only the most suitable candidates progress to the next stages.

To maintain fairness and transparency, it is recommended that more than one person is involved in reviewing applications. For instance, one individual may carry out the initial sift, narrowing the pool of applicants, while a second person reviews the shortlisted candidates to decide who will be invited to interview. This dual approach helps minimize unconscious bias and ensures consistency in decision-making.

Document your decision making so that you can provide feedback if requested and can be clear that no discrimination has taken place.

If you find inconsistencies in any applications, such as unexplained gaps in employment, should be noted and explored further during the interview stage.

Inviting candidates for an interview

It is important that all candidates are treated consistently and respectfully. For example, make any reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities to ensure they are not disadvantaged at any stage of the process.

Furthermore, ensure you inform candidates about the interview or assessment format when you invite them to the next stage, so they can prepare adequately. It is considered best practice to include your interview questions in your invitation so that the candidate can prepare their answers, this might seem counterintuitive but the purpose of the interview is for the candidate to demonstrate they have the experience required to do

the job this will allow them to provide clear answers which you can then question to ensure accuracy.

We recommend that you ask the candidate if they have any requirements to allow them to attend the interview, this allows a person with a disability to disclose this and allow you to make adjustments.

Interviews

The interview process may vary depending on the role. For some positions, a single interview may suffice, while for others, you might consider multiple interviews.

Regardless of the format, interviews should be conducted by at least two individuals to ensure fairness and balance in evaluating candidates, this is mandatory for any roles requiring [Safer Recruitment](#).

We would recommend that the interview is structured as follows:

- Introductions and an outline of the role and its place in the parish.
- A couple of questions about their experience.
- 5-6 competency-based questions – these are questions such as “Tell us about a time when you resolved a challenging customer complaint” and any follow up questions this elicit
- Any questions you have about any gaps in their CV, technical knowledge, qualifications, upcoming holiday.
- Candidate opportunity to ask questions.
- Summary of next steps and when you will be in touch.

Work exercises

We would recommend you always consider using a work-based exercise as part of your selection criteria. These give you a better idea of the persons skill level that an interview alone. Work-based exercises could be some thing they complete in advance, for example in Redway HR we ask all interview candidate to write a blog post which could go on our website about a relevant HR topic. They can also be an activity they undertake as part of the selection day, examples include:

- Preparing a notice
- Drafting a document
- Sorting an in-tray
- Planning a children’s activity
- Attending a children’s activity and running an activity

Once all activities have been completed, all interviewers and assessors will come together to discuss the candidates' performance. Using the documented scores from each, the panel will collectively assess each candidate's suitability for the role. This final discussion allows the panel to identify any consistent patterns in performance across different exercises and ensures that decisions are evidence-based and aligned with the criteria.

It is always advisable to have one or two additional candidates in reserve, in case the chosen candidate declines the offer or does not meet the conditions of employment. These reserve candidates should be assessed and ranked during the panel's final discussions so they can be contacted quickly if needed.

All records from the interviews and assessment activities should be retained for six months to one year in compliance with GDPR. This documentation provides a clear audit trail, ensuring transparency and fairness while safeguarding against potential disputes or allegations of discrimination.

Making a job offer

Once the interview and assessment process are complete, and the preferred candidate has been identified, the next step is to make a job offer.

When offering the position, always issue a **Conditional Job Offer** in writing, a template is available on the diocesan website. A conditional offer ensures that the candidate's appointment is subject to specific pre-employment checks. Those are:

- **References:** We would recommend at least two satisfactory references are obtained; this is mandatory if the role is subject to safer recruitment. These will normally come from two different previous employers or academic tutors; however character references are acceptable if the candidate has no employment history or has taken a career break.
- **Right to Work:** Employers are legally required to keep on file proof that all of their employees (including British citizens) have the right to work in the UK. There is more guidance available on the diocesan website.
- **Proof of academic achievement or professional membership:** Where it is relevant to the role we would recommend asking to see certificates or professional membership details.
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check:** If the person will be working with children or vulnerable adults the a DBS check is required for roles. You can get further guidance from your safeguarding adviser or the Diocese Safeguarding Team.

These conditions should be clearly stated in the offer letter, along with instructions for completing the necessary checks.

The conditional offer letter should also include details about the role, salary, start date, and benefits, as well as a deadline for the candidate to accept the offer in writing. This ensures clarity and allows the organisation to proceed efficiently with onboarding or to move to a reserve candidate if the offer is declined.

ONBOARDING

Once you are satisfied that all the pre-employment checks have been successfully completed you can begin planning for their start date.

Contract & Documentation

It is a legal requirement for an employer to provide written terms of employment no later than the first day of employment. A template employment contract is available on the diocesan website.

Payroll

To process salary payments, the employee must provide their bank details, National Insurance number, and a P45 from their previous employer or new starter checklist if they have not working the current tax year - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/starter-checklist-for-pay>.

If they are going to earn more than £10,000 per year you will need to set up an autoenrollment pension scheme and provide them with details within two months after they start. [The Church of England Pensions Board](#) and [NEST](#) offer suitable pensions.

Next of Kin / Emergency Contact Details

The employee should provide emergency contact details, which should be stored in a securely in case of accidents or urgent situations at work. This information is confidential but must be accessible in case is needed.

Mandatory Training

If there is mandatory training the new employee must complete, such as GDPR (data protection), safeguarding and health & safety, this should be detailed in their contract and details of how to access it made available when they join.

Work Equipment

Ensure you have ordered any necessary equipment for the role, such as a uniform, laptop, mobile phone.

Induction

The first weeks are crucial in setting the scene for engagement and future performance. Try to put together a 2–4 week schedule with key trainings, courses and meetings to give the new hire a clear and structured start. Make sure to set up regular 121s—starting weekly and then moving to every two weeks—so you can check in on how they’re feeling, spot any struggles early on, and provide feedback or corrections if needed.