



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

The Diocesan Youth Advisory Team

SMART GUIDE to Youth Worker Employment

“A Youth Worker must be the symptom of a Church’s concern for young people – not the sole arm of the Church’s activity or mission amongst young people.”

This guide is designed to assist you in the preliminary stages of considering employment of a Youth Worker.

As an initial document, it aims to signpost you towards other appropriate resources, advice and to give guidance as to when you should ideally call on the resources available to you from the Diocesan Youth Advisory Team.

Firstly, we’re delighted that this is something you, your parish, your community are considering! Youth Work is a challenge and a wonderful opportunity in any community and when done well can be transformative, life enhancing and faith building.

However, it is also a huge responsibility and this Smart Guide will hopefully assist you in avoiding the most common pitfalls and in ironing out any issues as you develop your vision and put the practicalities in place.

Essential Resources:

Don’t do anything without first taking a close look at these publications!

1. ***Employing Youth and Children’s Workers*** book – Paul Godfrey and Nic Sheppard; Church House Publishing £8.99
2. ***Just Employment*** downloadable resource pack from Church Urban Fund
<http://www.cuf.org.uk/act/resources-projects/just-employment>
We encourage you to make a donation for the use of this excellent, recently updated pack.
3. ***Employing a Youth Worker*** resource pack from the Diocese of Portsmouth.
http://portsmouth.anglican.org/fileadmin/images/What_we_do/discipleship_training/youth/DOP_Employing_a_YouthWorker.pdf
(Thanks to Ben Mizen for his permission to reference this.)

These documents provide the details and ‘flesh on the bones’ which this Smart Guide can only briefly reference. It would certainly be worth buying a number of copies of the book (No.1) for those who will take your plans forward so you are all on the same page!

Research and Preparation:

All these resources encourage any church, project or group considering employment to ask themselves some key questions at a very early stage. This might be done in the context of a Church meeting, PCC meeting, at a Parish Council, Community Services or Churches Together meeting or in smaller gatherings.

The gist of these questions should be as follows:

- Why do we want a youth worker?
- What are our expectations of a youth workers?

Other important research which can be done early on involves visiting, (perhaps more than once) other projects or parishes in your area where youth work happens. They may have a volunteer team, an employed worker or deliver youth work jointly with others. It's all useful expertise.

Ask questions of the leaders/staff and young people. Get ideas, watch and learn – it will be invaluable as you consider the way forward.

Your Area Youth Adviser will be able to help with suggesting appropriate groups to visit in your locality.

What are the options?

The possibilities are endless – churches in this Diocese employ youth workers on a full and part time basis; as part of a student arrangement with a College (CYM or Oasis are examples); on a Gap Year Placement scheme (through Careforce, Viz a Viz or Time for God, amongst others). You might also employ in partnership with other local churches, through the Council, in connection with a School or Charity or as a Deanery.

Where to Start?

You might decide to hold a vision day or evening to gather together those who have a particular stake in the youth work – parents, carers, teachers, other organisations, young people themselves, uniformed groups...whatever works for you.

These discussions need to be brought to the appropriate committee within your Church or organisation's decision making process before you can move on. Don't underestimate how long this can take – and consider ways in which you can present your ideas and gain further input.

This is a project that your Area Youth Adviser can help with, perhaps providing some facilitation to get people talking or supporting your PCC presentation or some other guidance on the next steps if you are further on in the process.

Other Issues to Consider:

An Appointments Team to oversee aspects of the continuing process. It is vital to gather together a Team as early as possible – covering a wide variety of skills and interests and with enough time to put in for the next few months. Perhaps someone with legal or accounting expertise, a background in recruitment or human resources, artistic and design skills or a great administrator? Regardless of whom you choose, they should be fully in support of the vision for youth work that has been agreed and discussed. Depending on which route you go down (see 'What are the Options?') you might have a wider reach of people to include. Youth Advisers can be invited for

their expertise and depending on their time constraints may be able to commit more fully than just one meeting.

Finance is a process which cannot be rushed – but it is also important that it doesn't lead the process (“we can only employ for 12 hours a week because we only have £???”) Finance support can be found in a variety of places: contact your Area Parish Development Adviser who can access resources to help. Your local Community Voluntary Services (CVS) also have databases. Is there someone who works in Funding who might be able to help? Talk to the Church, Treasurer, Budget setters early on and be realistic as well as thinking big! All the listed resources have guidance and ideas on funding and securing on-going finance.

Paperwork, Policies & Procedures' should be in place as much as possible before moving towards advertising or appointment. Many youth workers will have expectations that appropriate support and legalities are in place before they considering applying or accepting a position. AMAZE (www.amaze.org.uk) can help with up to date information on these issues and the resources mentioned before will also provide useful templates.

Local Support

Area Youth Advisers are available to support you throughout this process – it is usually helpful if you contact them via email or phone call in the early stages of your discussions just to keep them in the picture. Then invite them along to a Vision event or more detailed discussions when the time comes.

Youth Advisers are involved at a number of levels through the process: guidance on advertising and drawing up job descriptions and specifications, interview panels, induction periods and the supervision and management of a worker once in post. They can also support you with practicalities around training, payroll and Deanery interaction. Every situation is different, but we are here to be used so get in touch!

Youth Adviser contact details can be found here:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/youth-advisers.html>

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