



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

## The Diocesan Youth Advisory Team

### **SMART GUIDE to Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers**

We are assuming, because you are reading this document or have downloaded it, that you have a desire to work with young people and draw others into that work...and we aim to help you turn that into a reality!

### **Why Volunteers?**

An active youth ministry is a realistic possibility for *any* church, provided that the church is prepared for it! An essential aspect of successful youth work is to initiate, develop and nurture a Team who can embark on the youth work journey together! We believe that youth ministry is fundamental to the ministry of every church, because young people are the church of today AND tomorrow. We're delighted that you, your parish, your community are already doing or considering Youth Work! It is a challenge and a wonderful opportunity and when done well can be transformative, life enhancing and faith building. It is precisely because of volunteers that the Christian Church in the UK has contact with many thousands of young people each week – a formidable work force! But that doesn't make it easy!

This Guide contains some of our Top Tips for building and developing Team as well as signposts towards other appropriate resources.

### **Communicate**

Whatever stage you are at with your Youth Work, it's important to tell people its happening! Use any method that works for you – church newsletter, website, Sunday announcement, local paper, Facebook and social media, flyers to schools...to create a buzz and share what is going on.

Communicate the vision clearly – why are you doing this work? How can people support it (time, prayer, finance, other skills)? Tell stories when you can to make it more real and accessible to those on the fringes.

Volunteers will bring different perspectives and a fresh injection of skills. Be open to offers - it's not always the most obvious (or youngest!) who make the best youth workers!

### **Personal Invitation**

Experience tells us that most people don't ask to be involved, but will consider the possibility seriously when approached personally. If you know your church or community well, who stands out with particular interests or abilities which might enhance the youth work? If you don't know people well, ask others who do and observe carefully – who naturally engages young people? You could host a meal (or other event with food, it always helps!) to get to know people better and then prayerfully consider who to approach. Notices from the front on a Sunday only yield so much fruit so be prepared to go out on a limb – you may be positively surprised!

### **Be Clear about Expectations**

Obviously, with any role involving work with children and young people, certain procedures need to be adhered to. Make sure you are clear about the need for CRB forms and application forms to be completed from the beginning. Have a job description for the role so everyone can refer to this in case of query. It doesn't need to be long or very detailed but it is a good way to avoid confusion.

Ensure dates for planning, training or team meetings are shared in plenty of time.

Give people time to consider how much they wish to be involved – but don't wait for them to get back to you - take the initiative! Plan for an induction period to enable volunteers to see how they get on. Consider a training session for new volunteers – this is something your Area Youth Adviser can help with.

### **Caring for and Developing your Team – some ideas:**

*Training* – encourage people to attend appropriate training. Or bring in a trainer for a session specifically for your team. What areas of training would benefit your team?

*Thank you events & Socials* – a chance to relax and hang out together will always enhance the work of a team. Having some worship or prayer time is a good addition. Celebrate the work that has been done over the term or year.

*Communicate* – Christmas cards, handwritten thank yous or other personal touches.

*Review and recalibrate* – offer opportunities for people to look back on how things are going and to share joys and concerns. You could do this informally at a social event or an away day but one to one time is also helpful – and adding food to this time always helps!

### **Resources**

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/childrensministry/volunteers/volunteerrecruiting.html>

<http://www.slideshare.net/jhigginbotham/recruiting-volunteers-472695>

[http://www.whatyoudoishowtheyhear.com/recruiting\\_volunteers.html](http://www.whatyoudoishowtheyhear.com/recruiting_volunteers.html)

**How to Develop a Youth Work Project**, Nigel Pimlott - Grove Youth Series Y6, Grove Books, Cambridge 2007

**Delivering Good Youth Work**, Ingram and Harris, Lyme Regis: Russell House, 2001

*A Guide to Youth Ministry – Exploring the needs of your Church*, Katie McDaniel, National Society/Church House Publishing 1999 (particularly chapter on *The Team Approach*)

(If you are considering employing a youth work professional, there is an accompanying Smart Guide on Employment [www.chelmsford.anglican.org/youth](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/youth))

### **What next?**

Diocesan Youth Advisers are available to support you with any aspect of youth work! The Equipping and Engage courses run within the Diocese are ideal for continuing training and development, for meeting other youth leaders and gaining support and ideas. <http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/equipping.html>

**Youth Adviser contact details can be found here:**

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