



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

The Rt Revd David Hawkins, Area Bishop of Barking
Barking Lodge, Verulam Avenue, Walthamstow, London E17 8ES
t: 020 8509 7377 b.barking@chelmsford.anglican.org

To Clergy, Readers, Youth Workers, Diocesan Synod and Bishops Council

4th October 2013

Dear Colleagues

Chelmsford Diocese Authorisation Scheme- 'Serving with Accountability'

As Chair of the Youth Advisory Group, I am writing to you with regard to some important developments concerning volunteers and paid employees working with youth, children or families. The resulting authorisation scheme is attached to this letter.

The last twenty years has seen a proliferation of ministry amongst children, young people and families by churches and groups of all denominations. This is a remarkable achievement and one to be celebrated as the Church has become one of the biggest providers of youth work in the country. This has led to many churches appointing voluntary and paid workers including those who oversee such groups. Chelmsford Diocese is no exception with many volunteers performing co-ordinating roles, and other churches employing someone to fulfil children's, youth or family worker positions¹.

While levels of appointment and employment have increased, accountability arguably has not. For example there is no accurate register of churches employing workers or a list of the people, voluntary or paid, who are co-ordinating youth ministries in our churches. This situation leaves the diocese vulnerable in respect of challenges regarding poor safeguarding. There is no agreed standard of training for individuals with such roles and the quality and effectiveness of PCCs acting as overseers and employers is varied. Indeed, particularly where paid roles have not been thoroughly thought through, there is a disturbingly high rate of breakdown, with employees and employers being left damaged by the process.

This is one of the reasons why Transforming Presence challenges the diocese to 'Serve with Accountability'. With all this in mind, for the past seven years we have been working towards an **Authorisation Scheme** for those in roles of responsibility among youth, children or families. One of the reasons for the length of time this has taken to put in place has been a lack of agreement regarding how lay ministry in general should be authorised. In 2012 the diocese agreed that there would be two forms of authorisation namely Licensed Lay Ministers and Authorised Lay Ministers, such as Pastoral Assistants, Evangelism Enablers, and Youth and Children's workers. In July Bishop's Council unanimously agreed this scheme and its implementation. This will have consequences for all youth, children's and family workers in the Diocese not least as certain funding streams frequently used to resource such posts, will now be conditional upon subscription to the scheme.

There are two elements to the scheme.

- One concerning the authorisation of **workers**, whether, children, youth or families workers, and the other,
- Concerning **employing churches and overseeing bodies** becoming a good practice organisation –namely signing up to 'We Love Our Youth Worker'²

Please note that Authorisation will apply to both employed workers and also to volunteers who hold positions of significant leadership responsibility, i.e. exercising management, supervision, and pastoral care for leaders of children, youth and family groups.



The Authorisation Scheme was officially launched in September at a diocesan meeting attended by some fifty workers and representatives from their organisations. However, we want to ensure that all those for whom this is relevant have an opportunity to hear and understand the details of the scheme. To that end, the Youth Advisers will be holding further meetings in each Episcopal Area as follows:

Barking Area: Sunday 3rd November, 3.30-6pm at All Saints' Church, Inmans Row, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0NH

Please register your attendance by emailing Andy Poultney on barkingandy@btconnect.com

Bradwell Area: Saturday 9th November at Emmanuel Church, Church View, Laindon Road Billericay, Essex, CM12 9LD

Please register your attendance by emailing Alice Smith youthadviseralice@yahoo.co.uk

Colchester Area: Sunday 24th November, 2-4.30pm at Christchurch, Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3AT

Please register your attendance by emailing Rachel Brett on colchesterareayouthadviser@gmail.com

Can I please ask that if you are a volunteer or a paid employee in a position of significant leadership responsibility, exercising management, supervision, and pastoral care for leaders of children, youth and family groups that you attend one of the above meetings. Ideally, a representative from your organisation who has responsibility for your oversight and your role, should also attend because of the implications for employing and overseeing bodies

There will undoubtedly be teething problems to overcome and issues to resolve, but we firmly believe that this scheme will enable:

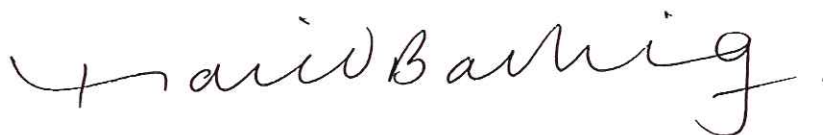
- Better and more effective employment practice for paid and volunteer workers leading to less breakdown of relationships in future.
- Greater recognition for workers in the parish and diocese as they can be seen alongside and with the same status as other Authorised Lay Ministries in the diocese.
- a greater 'Serving with Accountability' for both worker and employing/overseeing body.

The scheme should be quite simple to opt into and something we hope everyone will see the benefit of. We are using this Autumn to promote and explain the scheme with a view that all workers and churches will sign up to the Authorisation scheme in the New Year.

We are in the process of appointing someone on a fee basis to administrate this scheme so that it is well sustained into the future.

Please make the meeting in your Area a priority.

With my prayers and best wishes.



Rt Revd David Hawkins
Lead Bishop for Youth.

¹ The 2011 audit identified 31 employed workers and the adviser team estimate the total number to be nearer 50 employed workers

²The WLOYW Charter has existed for several years and has become recognised as being a national quality kite mark for those who oversee volunteer or paid children, youth and family workers.