

## **Authorised Children, Youth and Family Workers and Good Practice Guidelines for organisations (becoming a ‘We Love Our Youth Worker’ organisation)**

The process for individuals, churches and other groups in Chelmsford Diocese

Adopted by Bishop’s Council - **July 2013**

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### **Background**

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 such work in the country.

This has led to many Churches appointing both voluntary and paid individuals to work with, and oversee such groups. Chelmsford Diocese is no exception with many volunteers performing co-ordinating roles, and many others actually employing someone to fulfil various children, youth or family worker positions<sup>1</sup>.

While levels of appointment and employment have increased, ‘accountability’ in this area arguably has not. For example, there is no definitive register of churches employing workers, or a list of those, voluntary or paid, co-ordinating significant ‘youth’ ministries in our churches; there is no agreed standard of training for individuals within such roles, and the quality and effectiveness of PCCs acting as overseers and employers is varied. Indeed, particularly where paid roles have not been properly thought through (or involved consultation with appropriate external expertise) there is a disturbingly high rate of breakdown, with employees and employers being left damaged by the process. While some workers and PCCs avail themselves of the training and support offered by Diocesan Advisers, this is on a purely voluntary basis, there is no requirement to do so.

*Transforming Presence* challenges the diocese to ‘Serve with Accountability’. In this area of ministry that means introducing greater mutual accountability.<sup>2</sup> This paper therefore covers the processes for:

- a) Authorised Children, Youth and Family Workers, and
- b) Good Practice Guidelines for churches, employing and overseeing bodies by registering as a ‘We Love Our Youth Worker’ organisation.<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> This process complements and reflects other changes and requirements being introduced in all areas of Lay Ministry within the Diocese and also sits alongside the new Safeguarding policy and requirements. The purpose and aim of all such changes are to see a greater measure of individuals and Churches, ‘Serving with Accountability’

<sup>3</sup> The WLOYW Charter has existed for several years and become recognised as being similar to a national Quality Kite Mark for those who oversee volunteer or paid children, youth and family workers

## **The Benefits of Authorisation and Good Practice Guidelines**

Authorisation presents clear benefits for the organisation/parish, the Worker, the Diocese as a whole, and most importantly, the children, young people and families we serve.

### **1. It is important for the parish/organisation**

Authorising a children's, youth or families worker means that the worker is authorised to minister within that parish and within the remit of the Job Description and contract of employment (where appropriate).

The act of Authorisation will naturally provide an opportunity for the parish's work with young people and children to be publicly celebrated, supported and prayed for. This can give children's, youth and families work, whether voluntary or employed, the status it deserves.

### **2. It is important for the worker**

An 'Authorised' worker is unambiguously accountable to the employing or overseeing body (PCC or other). Authorisation by a Bishop affirms them in their role and calling. In Chelmsford where workers are either Licensed (Clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers) or Authorised (Evangelists, Pastoral Assistants), this process affords some lay children, youth or family workers, whether voluntary or paid, the same recognition as other Authorised Ministries. It is therefore a significant new step in valuing and affirming this vital ministry.

In order to be authorised, the individual must demonstrate that they meet certain standards. In addition, an individual will only be authorised where the employing body commits itself to the Good Practice Guidelines of the We Love Our Youth Worker Charter (henceforth abbreviated to 'Becoming a WLOYW organisation'). This gives the individual some confidence of minimum standards in terms of management, employment, development, and fair treatment from their organisation.

### **3. It is important for the Diocese**

The Bishops are better able to exercise their pastoral care for those who work in the Diocese once they are properly recognised. Children's, youth and families workers working within parishes are, in fact, sharing with the Bishops in their Episcopal task. While the legal responsibility for the employment relationship rests clearly with the employer (typically the PCC), Authorised workers become part of a wider diocesan family and support network, working most closely with the appropriate Diocesan Advisers.

### **4. It is important for children, young people and families**

The main objective is for this process to be of benefit to children, young people and families who will be enabled to experience more of Jesus in the safest of environments. While Authorisation is not mandatory, it is hard to imagine why any Parish or project would not want to sign up to these basic standards for the benefit of all those involved, particularly the children, young people and families.

This is a new venture for the Diocese and patience is required all round in order that this process is effective and does indeed lead to a greater 'Serving with Accountability'. Individuals or employers should not be put off or threatened by the introduction of new criteria for those who hold positions of significant responsibility in working with children,

young people of families. Rather, we would hope that greater accountability for those that work in this ministry would be welcomed and encouraged.

## **The two components**

*Authorisation* is aimed at workers, voluntary or paid, who have significant responsibility for oversight of children, youth or family ministries, or who are employed by a PCC or other such body to work with children, young people or families in the church or community (including schools); it represents the minimum level of ministry and training criteria anticipated of such a person, employed by a body within the Diocesan family.

This therefore includes not only employees on a salary, but also volunteers or stipended ministers working with children, young people or families who hold positions of significant leadership responsibility, exercising management, supervision, and pastoral care for leaders of children, youth and family groups<sup>4</sup>. (For example, this could include a volunteer; a clergy person or ordinand in training; an intern or a gap year student).

*Good practice guidelines*: The second component is for organisations in the Diocesan family seeking to engage in children, youth or family ministries to commit themselves to the good practice guidelines and demonstrate this through registration with WLOYW.

Going forward, successful Mission Opportunity Fund (and LOB grants) for paid posts will be conditional upon an employing body becoming a WLOYW organisation, and embracing the authorisation process for any prospective employee.

## **I. Good Practice Guidelines – becoming a WLOYW Organisation**

The WLOYW National Charter for church youth workers is a set of seven promises employers make about the practices and principles they will use in employing a youth worker (or children's and families worker):<sup>5</sup>

### **A. We will pray and support**

Clear support structures will be identified, including regular meetings with an appropriately skilled line manager and a small support group, and/or a mentor or non-managerial supervisor

### **B. We will give space for retreat and reflection**

### **C. We will provide on-going training and development**

### **D. We will give a full day of rest each week**

### **E. We will share responsibility** between the organisation and the worker

### **F. We will strive to be an excellent employer by:**

- Providing a full job description for the role, including job title, line manager, responsibilities and hours of work

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<sup>4</sup> Authorisation is an *expectation* for anyone exercising such responsibility; but is also *open* to anyone aspiring to such roles

<sup>5</sup> This is a summary of the criteria. For a full description please visit the WLOYW web-site

[www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk](http://www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk)

- Providing a staff handbook or other written document, containing information on grievance procedures, sickness pay, holiday entitlement, pension provision, first aid, health and safety policy and fire safety policy
- Facilitating a review procedure (at least annual)
- Ensuring adequate employer liability public indemnity insurance are in place
- Ensuring reasonable expenses are reimbursed [if agreed in advance]
- Providing a Living Wage in line with current rates of pay for such roles, with an incremental inflationary increase included, in addition to which further pay rises to recognise growing experience could be included
- Issuing a Contract of Employment that complies with current legislation

## **G. We will celebrate and appreciate**

Becoming a WLOYW organisation involves registering on the We Love Our Youth Worker website and aspiring to fulfil all aspects of the good practice National Charter. Registration is free. The organisation would be expected to keep up its commitment and the Diocesan Advisers reserve the right to withdraw authorisation from any individual in an organisation which does not appear to be honouring its commitment to the WLOYW charter.

Employers are also strongly encouraged to join Amaze, the Association of Christian Youth and Children's Workers ([www.amaze.org.uk/](http://www.amaze.org.uk/)) to keep up to date with current employment legislation, and gain access to model contracts, appraisal tools, good practice, etc.

### ***New Employers of Paid Workers***

It is anticipated that a Diocesan Adviser will be alongside the organisation as it becomes an employer of a children's, youth or families worker; from the initial 'dreaming dreams' stage, through to signing a contract, and beyond. To that end, the process of becoming a WLOYW organisation is likely to run hand in hand with this appointment process, with the Adviser available at all stages.

### ***Existing / Long Term Employers of Paid workers***

For those who are already employers of workers, becoming a WLOYW organisation simply means registering and committing to the good practice criteria of the 'We Love our Youth Worker' Charter, and working in consultation with a Diocesan Adviser. This would obviously also include seeking the Authorisation of the employed worker.

### ***For organisations engaging volunteers in significant roles of responsibility***

Registration is open to organisations with volunteers, clergy/ordinands in training, interns/students on a Gap Year programme or training course, etc who hold positions of significant leadership responsibility, exercising management, supervision, and pastoral care for leaders of children, youth and family groups.

## 2. Authorisation of (Paid and Voluntary) Workers

It is anticipated that a Diocesan Adviser will be involved in the whole process of the Authorisation of a worker. The worker will need to meet minimum ministry and academic standards described below, and they must be engaged by an organisation which has committed itself to the Good Practice Guidelines.

### I. MINISTRY CRITERIA

Workers seeking Authorisation will be expected to fulfil Ministry Criteria as follows:

- a) demonstrate an active Christian faith and spiritual life<sup>6</sup>
- b) be baptized, and a regular worshipping member of the Church of England, or a 'Church in full membership of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland'<sup>7</sup>
- c) have at least one year's proven leadership experience (paid or voluntary) including working with children, young people or families and oversight of others
- d) provide a satisfactory reference from a Minister or Recognised Church Leader
- e) be willing to engage with the wider diocese, including participation in the networks of Diocesan Children's, Youth or Families Workers (where possible for volunteers); and participate in further training offered by the Diocese
- f) possess a satisfactory DBS check, and equivalent for periods abroad
- g) have been trained in and have a good working knowledge of all relevant legislation including Safeguarding, Health and Safety and the Children Act (Basic Level PLUS)
- h) have satisfactorily completed the agreed probationary period (if employed)

### II. ACADEMIC CRITERIA

Workers seeking Authorisation will be expected to be able to make one of the following statements:

- a) *"I have an academic qualification which is equivalent to, or higher than a Level 3 certificate, in a subject which includes working with children, young people or families"*
  - Here, if a worker meets the appropriate Ministry Criteria and can apply statement a) (having a qualification equivalent to or higher than Level 3 Certificate, e.g. A level, BTec National, or NVQ Level 3) then in consultation with a Diocesan Adviser and overseeing body, they should be able to proceed to the next stage of Authorisation

or

- b) *"I have an academic qualification which is equivalent to, or higher than a Level 3 certificate in a subject which is not related to working with children, young people or families. BUT, I have significant ministry experience, and have participated in lots of other, ad-hoc, children/youth/family work training."*

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<sup>6</sup> Most often employing bodies are seeking to employ a worker to relate the Christian faith to others. To that end, adverts and Job Descriptions must clearly state that it is a 'Genuine Occupational Requirement' (GOR) for the worker to be a Christian in order to conform to the Equality Act (2010). In a small number of situations where the role is not primarily about sharing the Christian faith, further advice should be sought from Amaze or similar, to ascertain the necessity of inclusion of GOR language

<sup>7</sup> Akin to the Church Representation Rules, which require an individual to be baptised even if not a member of the CofE

- Here, a worker must meet the appropriate Ministry Criteria and compile a Portfolio of Evidence outlining knowledge and experience in relevant areas. The portfolio would demonstrate that they:
  - have a qualification equivalent to or higher than Level 3 Certificate, e.g. A level, BTec National, or NVQ Level 3 in subjects *unrelated* to working with children young people or families;
  - have considerable experience in working with children, young people or families;
  - and have undertaken significant ad-hoc training related to working with children young people or families (equivalent to the training and subjects covered in the Innovate course<sup>8</sup>. This could be via training run by a Local Authority or at YW the Conference or Takeaway or other local training events).

When a Portfolio of Evidence has been sufficiently prepared and agreed, then in consultation with a Diocesan Adviser and the overseeing body, they should be able to proceed to the next stage of Authorisation.

or

c) *“I do not have an academic qualification which is equivalent to, or higher than a Level 3 certificate BUT, I am prepared to work toward obtaining such a qualification.”*

- Where there are ministry or academic ‘gaps’ it would still be possible to pursue authorisation. This will involve a detailed conversation with a Diocesan Adviser to determine an appropriate package of training and practical experience for the individual so that they can demonstrate their competence and build up a portfolio of experience. For paid workers training is most likely to be via the Engage Level 3 Certificate in Youth Ministry, or equivalent for Children’s/Families Workers; for volunteers and in exceptional circumstances for paid workers, through the Diocesan Innovate Course. Individuals would be expected to work with a Diocesan Adviser over a period of time to meet the appropriate standards.

### **‘Wholly qualified’**

In order to become an Authorised Children’s, Youth or Families Worker an individual must have a *Calling* and suitable *Character*, as well as the required *Competence*. Being a good role model, having the right temperament, practising a Godly spirituality, and working well with others are just as important, if not more so, than being culturally relevant with young people or being able to effectively pass on Biblical truths to children.

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1. Aims and values, theology and Biblical grounding for children’s and youth work
2. Child and adolescent development, culture and risk
3. Starting from scratch, policies and procedures, health and safety
4. Accompanying, inclusion, support and managing behaviour
5. Leadership, team building, learning styles and personal and spiritual development
6. Empowering children and young people, and participation

To that end, the task of the Diocesan Adviser is to work in partnership to enable individuals to become 'wholly qualified'. This may mean participation in further specific training or development activities agreed prior to authorisation.

### **Becoming Authorised**

When all Ministry and Academic Criteria have been satisfactorily met by a worker, and the employing or engaging body (Parish or project) has become a WLOYW organisation, a worker will be able to be Authorised by the Diocese in an appropriate Commissioning Service in keeping with other Authorised Lay Ministries.

### **Next steps**

Those interested in finding out more should make contact with the appropriate Children's or Youth Adviser (see annex), who will provide further information.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of both components of the Authorisation process is to enable Churches and individuals to work more effectively with children, young people and families, in order that they may encounter Jesus in the most relevant, appropriate and safest programmes, relationships and environments. We must hold onto this crucial aim as we patiently seek to establish this new process in our churches and communities.

## Annex: Contacts and Resources

As at July 2013

### Contacts:

- Authorisation for Children's and Families Workers in the **Diocese:**  
Steve Kersys, [steve@saltshaker.org.uk](mailto:steve@saltshaker.org.uk)
- Authorisation for Youth Workers/Ministers in the **Barking Area:**  
Andy Poultney, [barkingandy@btconnect.com](mailto:barkingandy@btconnect.com)
- Authorisation for Youth Workers/Ministers in the **Bradwell Area:**  
Alice Smith, [youthadviseralice@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:youthadviseralice@yahoo.co.uk)
- Authorisation for Youth Workers/Ministers in the **Colchester Area:**  
Rachel Brett, [colchesterareayouthadviser@googlemail.com](mailto:colchesterareayouthadviser@googlemail.com)

### Resources:

- **Amaze, the Association of Christian Youth and Children's Workers** – offers support and advice for workers and employers regarding all aspects of employment, especially those working within the Christian/church sector (Annual Fee for Employers and Workers to join)  
[www.amaze.org.uk/](http://www.amaze.org.uk/)
- **Centre for Youth Ministry (CYM)** – specialises in the training of Christian youth workers and creators of the Engage Youth Ministry Course  
[www.centreforyouthministry.ac.uk](http://www.centreforyouthministry.ac.uk)
- **Church Urban Fund** – Just Employment (FREE Download). The Church Urban Fund guide on recruiting and employing voluntary and paid staff  
[www.cuf.org.uk/working-together/just-employment](http://www.cuf.org.uk/working-together/just-employment)
- **'Employing Youth and Children's Workers'** - book by Paul Godfrey and Nic Sheppard published by Church House Publishing (c£8.99)
- **We Love Our Youth Worker (WLOYW)** – seeking to ensure good employment practice for children's, youth or family workers.  
[www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk](http://www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk)