

How to...

...employ a youth, children's or family worker



When recruiting a paid worker for youth, children's or families work (or a combination of the three) it is necessary to prayerfully explore what the church needs and wants, and what it can afford, before proceeding with recruitment.

Some churches set out to employ a worker to reduce the work of the vicar and volunteers, but employing someone is not a magic fix to your problems! It can create more work for someone who will need to line manage them, and will require more input from volunteers, as there are likely to be more groups and activities to help with.

Employing a youth, children's or family worker should be carefully considered by your church leadership/PCC and congregation.

This document is designed to act as a helpful guide and check list. When employing a worker, we strongly advise the PCC to seek professional HR (human resources) advice, especially in relation to contracts.

1. Considerable prayer

Before launching into job descriptions and pay negotiations, have an initial meeting to seek vision, pray and explore requirements. What does your church need? What support can your church provide? How does the vision for youth, children's and family work fit into the wider vision of the church? Who can help you with this process?

You may need more than one meeting, and you might want to ask your Go Team Adviser or an external facilitator help you to think through and pray about the implications of employing someone new. This part of the process should not be rushed, and it may take longer than you expect.



2. Careful Consideration

Explore the different options and possibilities for the appointment of a worker:

- Full-time/part-time/sessional/project worker
- Taking on a trainee/student/gap-year option
- Job share options

It is important to seek advice at this point. Speak with churches who already have or are in the process of employing a worker, and consider visiting other places to talk with both workers and employers. Consider discussing it with the children/young people (and the parents) in your parish, to find out what they think or might want. If there is a school in your parish, you could discuss it with them, as most youth, children's or family workers have some input into their local schools.



Don't rush this part of the process, it is better to see what is possible or working well elsewhere, to help inform your needs, wants, vision and strategy moving forward.

3. A clear or developing strategy for youth, children's and family ministry in the church

It is vital to have a clear vision for the youth, children's and family ministry in the church, to ensure everyone is on the same page, and to help shape your expectations of the role. It will also offer the worker a clear framework and set of aims and expectations for their role. It is important to allow for some flexibility, as the worker may bring with them a particular set of gifts or skills that will naturally shape their ministry and could enhance the vision you have set.

4. Realistic expectations and clear aims

- Draw up a draft 'wish list', based on your needs and wants. This will be helpful in shaping the job description and person specification.
- Finalise the job description and person specification (the Go Team can help with this, and there is some helpful guidance on our website - see links below).
- Prepare an employment contract in line with the job description (see guidance on our website, or seek professional HR advice).
- Agree an appropriate management and supervision structure and set up a local support group to provide ongoing support, encouragement, advice and advocacy for the worker.



The PCC must draw up a funding strategy for the duration of the post. This should include:

- Salary costs (or salary package)
- Employment costs, National Insurance, pension and insurances
- Work related expenses
- A working budget
- Selection and recruitment costs
- How the funding will be obtained and maintained

Your local Go Team adviser can help with drawing up a funding strategy.

6. A clear management structure with ongoing support for the worker

This will give the worker confidence in their employer and line manager, and will strengthen accountability, efficiency and outcomes. It will also offer a safety net for both the employer and employee. The PCC or other main governing body is responsible for:

- Selection and recruitment
- Safe recruitment by ensuring all relevant checks (including DBS and references) have been carried out
- The worker's job description and any changes
- An appropriate induction (and exit) plan
- Ensuring line management is in place
- Issuing a contract of employment



- Pay and conditions
- Liabilities and insurances
- Employment contracts and contractual arrangements
- Offer and termination of employment
- Policies and procedures

Regular line management/supervision will help the worker to shape and develop their work, in line with their job description, expectations and the church's vision for the youth, children's and family ministry.

The Line Manager is responsible for:

- Regular supervision meetings to help the worker reflect and evaluate their work, celebrate what is going well, set goals, monitor targets, and deal with any problems or concerns
- Being a sounding board for new ideas and initiatives
- Offering encouragement and prayer when things are not going well
- Making sure effective channels of communication are in place
- Being an advocate for the worker with the PCC and other stakeholders
- Ensuring the worker has the resources and budget to carry out their work effectively
- Discussing any changes to their job description
- Identifying any Continual Professional Development (CPD) needs
- Agreeing/signing off expenses, time off and other leave
- Carrying out appraisals
- Carrying out requests on behalf of the PCC

Ongoing support will show that the employer and the church care for the worker, their well being and the developments in the youth, children's and family ministry. This may include additional pastoral, spiritual and prayer support when required.

7. A proper selection and recruitment process

Set out your selection and recruitment dates and a timeframe including:

- Expected start date for the post
- Where and when to advertise the post
- Closing date for applicants - plus how you will treat late enquiries or submissions
- Shortlisting date and how you will inform the candidates
- Interview date
- Format of interview and who will be involved
- When you will take up references (before or after interview)
- If you will be offering reasonable expenses and accommodation for interview if required



You should then be able to draw up the advert and put together an employment pack for prospective candidates. This pack might include:

- A covering letter
- The vision and aim for the post
- Dates of the interview and time scale of employment
- The job description and person specification
- A parish profile of the youth, children's and family ministry
- An application form (see example on our website, link below)
- Any other information that could be useful (avoid including too much information!)

Implement your selection and recruitment process (as above). After you have shortlisted, send a letter inviting candidates to interview. Include dates, times and venue, and what you expect of them at the interview, e.g. a presentation. At this point, you can determine if candidates will require accommodation/hospitality. You can take up references at this stage, or after the preferred candidate is chosen.

8. Interviewing and employing the worker

- Agree the interview process including who will be involved and questions to ask candidates
- Conduct interviews and inform candidate/s of the outcome
- Take up references if you have not already done so
- Conduct the safe recruitment process and relevant employment checks
- Formally offer the successful candidate the post by letter (subject to DBS and references)
- Agree start date and request for any required personal details
- Issue the contract of employment (including the agreed probationary time)
- Conduct the start day and implement the induction process
- Implement management structures and ongoing support for the worker
- Review the post in relation to any probationary agreements
- Have an appraisal system in place ready to review the worker and their work

Your local Go Team adviser can help with the employment process, offer basic guidance and draft paperwork. However, we are not HR experts, so it is important that you seek some professional HR advice. We are also happy to be involved with interviews, however you should remember that it is your appointment, not ours.

Useful links and information



Visit <https://tinyurl.com/bathwellsrecruitment> for Diocesan HR support with employment

Visit www.NYA.org.uk for advice and guidance on professional youth work pay scales and employment policies

Visit <https://www.paraklesis.org.uk> for advice and guidance on employing paid lay workers

Contact your archdeaconry based Go Team adviser for any other help or guidance.
<https://tinyurl.com/GoTeamContacts>