

Chaplain to the Suffragan Bishops of Birkenhead & Stockport

Introduction

The role of Chaplain to the Bishops of Birkenhead and Stockport is offered as a part time (0.4) position on a permanent contract. The hours are to be worked flexibly across the week, as agreed with the bishops. The stipend will be equivalent to that of an Incumbent, prorated for the proportion worked, giving a stipend of £12,410.40 per year (0.4 of a full stipend that is currently £31,026). A prorated housing allowance of £4,873 will be paid (0.4 of a full housing allowance that is currently £12,182).

In this paper 'bishops' refers to the Bishops of Birkenhead and Stockport, and 'diocese' refers to the Diocese of Chester.

This is a post for a person in deacon's or priest's orders, who is episcopally ordained in the Church of England or a Church in full Communion with it (subject to necessary permissions being granted for any overseas applicants). This post has attached to it an Occupational Requirement under the 2010 Equality Act, Part 1, Schedule 9, given the expectation that the post-holder will plan (and, where needed, lead) acts of worship and prayer on behalf of the bishops.

The Church of England is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its ministry and mission, promoting a safer culture and the welfare of every child, young person and adult. As such, the Church has robust policies, procedures and guidelines in place, to ensure good practice and all clergy are expected to be familiar with these policies, procedures and guidelines and to act in accordance with them. The postholder will be expected to keep their safeguarding training up to date at the required level and the role is subject to DBS checks.

The Chaplain to the Bishops of Birkenhead and Stockport is a key post supporting the ministry of the bishops, their PA, the Bishop of Chester and his senior team, and the wider bishops' team based at Bishop's House, Chester. It demands appreciation and understanding of the nature of their episcopal roles locally in the diocese and nationally in the wider church, and requires a high degree of confidentiality, sensitivity, and reliability.

The chaplain reports primarily to the Bishops of Birkenhead and Stockport but is technically line-managed by the Executive Chaplain and Director of Operations to the Bishop of Chester, who remains the substantive Bishop's Chaplain for the Diocese of Chester and senior member of support staff for the Bishops of the Diocese of Chester. (Holidays, for example, will be agreed with the bishops, but signed off by the Executive Chaplain. HR requirements will often be overseen in practice by the bishops but remain the responsibility of the Executive Chaplain.)

The postholder's role is focussed especially on supporting the public facing nature of the bishops' roles, and on leading special projects under their direction. It will require close, collaborative working with the PA to the bishops and must at all times enhance the bishops' ministries and reflect their care for others and the priorities they espouse, as well as championing the new culture and emerging strategy of the Diocese of Chester.

The postholder will work from a base in their home, though the role will require attendance at meetings around the diocese, including Church House, Daresbury, the bishops own houses and the offices at Bishop's House, Chester. Much of the work will be behind the scenes, though it will include frequent collaboration with various groups, teams and working parties around the diocese and in the national church. The postholder will also be connected with the existing team based at Bishop's House, Chester

The Role

Supporting the public facing nature of the bishops' roles, and leading special projects under the direction of the bishops.

i) Strategic

- a) Pray for the work of the bishops.
- b) To support the bishops in their diocesan and national work through administrative support, undertaking research and by leading special projects relating to their responsibilities under their direction and oversight.
- c) To support the bishops in their leadership of the workstreams they chair under the Diocesan Strategy.

d) To act as required as the bishops' personal representative with individuals, parishes and at events and meetings, and on task groups within the Diocese.

ii) Liturgical

a) To advise the PA to the bishops on the planning and content of services the bishops are scheduled to lead or participate in and, if required, to advise on and provide prayers and liturgies, faithful to the Anglican tradition, for civic and ecclesiastical occasions.

b) to support the bishops at these services as requested. It is not anticipated that this will be a common request.

iii) Pastoral and Administrative

a) Along with the bishops' PA, to be a person to whom the bishops can turn and speak to in confidence, providing an informed and reflective conversation partner to enable the bishops' deliberations.

b) To attend meetings with or in place of the bishops as required by prior arrangement and to assist with shaping agendas and ensuring that the bishops follow through with any agreed actions.

c) To assist the bishops in their contact with and care of clergy, diocesan staff and lay leaders, including by responding to pastoral needs and significant events.

d) To assist with managing Ministerial Development Reviews.

e) To assist with the bishops' involvement in managing vacancies and making appointments, and to be their representative to the Vacancy Support Group.

f) To support the PA to the bishops in the management of their correspondence and appointments, providing cover for the PA to the bishops if required.

g) To support the bishops in their hospitality ministry, where requested, for example by attending events and receptions and ensuring all guests are well cared for.

h) To undertake whatever other tasks the bishops may reasonably require.

Essential skills and attributes:

a) Working alongside the bishops with grace and integrity and assisting them with wisdom and humour.

b) Be emotionally intelligent and theologically alert, with a strong ability for reading people and situations, relating well across a diverse range of ages, personalities, cultures and theological convictions.

c) Be flexible and adaptable, able to work to tight deadlines, to prioritise, to cope with complex and competing demands, and to assemble resources on a wide variety of subjects.

d) Enjoy working as part of a small team, with the spontaneity and natural generosity which interdependence requires.

e) Provide pastoral support to the Bishop's Staff, with a proven capacity to work calmly and effectively through more stressful seasons of ministry.

f) Be computer literate, and able to draft texts, emails, letters, memos and other documents to a high standard and with attention to detail.

g) Work in accordance with GDPR requirements. Work to the highest levels of confidentiality and loyalty, yet ready to challenge the bishops and hold them to the highest standards of integrity and Christian ministry; to provide the bishops with a sense of perspective and to help them to laugh at themselves.

h) Be familiar and creative with traditional and contemporary liturgies, able to lead effectively diverse forms of worship.

i) Have a passion for evangelism, growing disciples and the growth of the church.

j) Develop a working knowledge of the vacancy processes of the Church of England and an ability to liaise with the Archdeacons, Rural Deans, Parish Representatives and Patrons.

k) Be confident and assured in following due process in supporting the bishops in all matters relating to safeguarding and clergy discipline.

l) Have a full driving licence and access to a vehicle as required (subject to disability requirements and other suitable provision).

Terms and Conditions of Service and Other Notes

a) The post-holder will be a deacon or priest of the Church of England, or of a church in full communion with it. They will sometimes plan and lead worship on behalf of the bishops and preside at services appropriate to the Church of England. This post has attached to it an occupational requirement under the 2010 Equality Act, Part 1, Schedule 9.

b) This post is subject to an enhanced plus DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance and up to date safeguarding training.

c) A prorated contribution to the Church of England Funded Pensions Scheme will be paid.

- d) Working expenses will be reimbursed monthly from the Bishop's Office on behalf of the Church Commissioners. Car mileage will be reimbursed at the prevailing Church Commissioners' rate.
- e) The expectation is of a similar time commitment as the hours worked by a parish priest.
- f) You are entitled to the prorated equivalent of 12 days paid annual leave per year. This is exclusive of public and additional holidays. The leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December.
- g) Spiritual and Professional Growth: The Chaplain is encouraged to have a Spiritual Director or equivalent, to make an annual retreat and to attend CMD events. They are not a member of the Crozier Network.
- h) The chaplain will engage with MDR in the same manner as any cleric of the Diocese, and have a 'light touch' ASR for the purpose of record keeping as part of the wider Bishops' team.
- i) In order to facilitate the maintenance of a healthy and balanced ministry and lifestyle, it is recognised that the Chaplain will wish to undertake responsibilities within the life of the Church or wider community that are outside this job description. These should be agreed with the bishops before being accepted, and, in any conflict of time or interests, commitment to supporting the work of the bishops will be expected to take priority.
- j) During the probationary period the employment may be terminated by one month's written notice on either side or by pay in lieu of notice by your employer. Once your appointment is confirmed the notice period will be extended to three months on either side or by pay in lieu of notice by your employer.
- k) Should you be summarily dismissed on the grounds of gross misconduct, your employment will be terminated without notice.
- l) There will be a probationary period of six months.
- m) This post is offered as an open-ended contract, subject to a six-month probationary period. The appointee will be given the Bishop's General Licence under seal.