

## Section 2 - Role Descriptions and Person Specifications

5 minutes read

Last updated: 15 July 2021

Version: 1

### Requirements

2.1 All roles that fall within the scope of this guidance must have a written role description and person specification<sup>1</sup>

2.2 Role descriptions must make any safeguarding aspects clear and refer to the Church body's commitment to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults.

---

<sup>1</sup>Parochial clergy office holders may be the exception to this as there is no legal requirement for a role description and the legal requirements of their role are as set out in the Canons and other legislation. Clergy office holders are not required to work to a role description. At the time of the appointment, the parish is required to produce a statement of needs, but this is not legally binding on the office holder once appointed. The patron (for incumbent appointments), PCC and Bishop may agree a role description and person specification before the post is advertised, but again this is not legally binding once the appointment has been made.

# Good practice advice

## Why?

Having clearly written documents enables a Church body to think through what they want from a role, whether paid or voluntary, and what sort of person would be suitable.

It gives people confidence that the Church body takes its work with children, young people and vulnerable adults seriously when they are given a clear role, know to whom they are accountable and what their responsibilities are.

It should be noted that for clergy office holders and clergy with Permission to Officiate (PTO), the requirements of their role are determined by the Canons and other legislation and an Enhanced DBS check (with barred list check) is always required.

## How?

### Considering the Role

The first step to drawing up a role description and person specification is to properly consider the role.

<b>The Role Consider:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>What contact &amp; responsibilities does the role have in respect of children, young people and vulnerable adults - both direct &amp; indirect?</b></li><li>● <b>What is the role’s purpose and what duties are involved?</b></li><li>● <b>How and where the role will be carried out?</b></li><li>● <b>What skills are needed for the role?</b></li><li>● <b>What training is required?</b></li><li>● <b>Where does the role fit into the Church body’s structure?</b></li><li>● <b>To whom does the role report? Is it supervised or unsupervised?</b></li><li>● <b>Is the role eligible for a DBS Check? If so, at what level? (<a href="#">see Section 9: Disclosure &amp; Barring Service (DBS)</a>)</b></li></ul>
---------------------------	--

Consideration needs to be given to the “indirect” aspect of a role and the potential contact it may have with children, young people and vulnerable adults. A role might not be working directly with these groups but presents certain opportunities e.g. where it is based, hours worked. The role may not meet the criteria for carrying out an enhanced DBS check, but this does not stop other safer recruitment steps being taken, as well as a risk assessment being carried out so that any possible risks are identified and mitigated as far as possible.

### Role Descriptions

The general layout of job/volunteer role descriptions for all posts are likely to be similar but the contents will need to reflect local requirements, as well as the nature of the role. A role description for an employed post is likely to be more detailed and formal than a role description for a volunteer Sunday school helper.

<b>Role Descriptions</b>  <b>Identify:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The role title.</li><li>● The main purpose of the role.</li><li>● For <b>employees</b>, the main tasks or duties to be carried out.</li><li>● For <b>volunteers</b>, the expectations of the role.</li><li>● To whom the role reports.</li><li>● The extent of the role’s contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults and the responsibility for safeguarding.</li><li>● A statement that the person appointed will be expected to work within the policy and procedures of the relevant safeguarding policy.</li><li>● A statement that the person will be required to attend relevant safeguarding training.</li><li>● General statements relevant to all roles, such as requirements relating to health and safety.</li><li>● For <b>employees</b>, hours and days of work and, if used, grade/band.</li><li>● For <b>volunteers</b>, the time commitment anticipated (including, for example, setting up, clearing up, preparation during the week, meetings, training).</li><li>● Where appropriate, a statement that the person appointed will require an enhanced DBS disclosure (with/without barred list/s check).</li></ul>
--	---

Toolkit

- [Volunteer Role Description template](#)

Person Specifications

The person specification describes the attributes a suitable candidate will possess. It is used for drawing up any advertisements/notices about the role and forms the criteria for evaluating applicants and assessing candidates, helping to identify key areas for the focus of interview questions.

<b>Person Specifications</b>  <b>Describe:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Any qualifications or specific training required for the role.</li><li>● Any experience needed.</li><li>● Knowledge, skills and competencies required to carry out the duties of the role.</li><li>● General attributes which must include the need for commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.</li><li>● Any Occupational Requirements under the Equality Act 2010 – e.g. if there is a genuine requirement for an individual to be a practising Christian. (For further information on this please see ACAS guidance found here <a href="#">Overview: When an employer may make a decision based on age, race or another protected characteristic - Acas</a>)</li></ul>
--	--

The person specification should clearly indicate whether the stated criteria are:

- Essential – those areas without which the job or volunteer role cannot be performed,

or

- Desirable – not essential to carrying out the duties, but which would be valuable and may assist in the final selection process if several candidates meet the essential criteria.

# External Resources

- [The Chartered Institute for Personnel & Development](#)
- [ACAS](#)

# Toolkit

- [Person Specification template](#)

**This document is version 1 and was printed on 28 April 2024. The most up to date version of this policy can be found on the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding>**

**Source URL:** *<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/section-2-role>*