

The Church of England HR External Services is an HR consultancy service for dioceses, cathedrals and senior clergy, supporting the Church's people agenda through local projects and national initiatives. The team offers advice, guidance and additional resource to local HR professionals and leaders across the Church.

The HR External Services team has supported dioceses and cathedrals across the Church since 2021. The team consists of an experienced group of HR professionals who have specialist expertise in people management across the Church as well as in a wide range of other sectors and organisations. In addition to advising on the people aspects of national Church of England projects, the team works alongside local HR colleagues and other leaders in dioceses, cathedrals and parishes to offer advice, support and guidance, providing additional resource where needed.

Overall, the Service:

- provides **advice, support and training on employment and clergy office-holding matters** and complex case management
- provides a **cost-effective, not-for-profit consultancy service** using our church-based HR expertise (including [The Clergy Transitions Service](#))
- **supports and resources all those** working in HR in dioceses and cathedrals across the Church (including through the HR Network)
- **leads and supports national people initiatives** coming from other teams within the NCIs

What we offer

Advice and support around employment and clergy office-holding

The team is well placed to offer advice on clergy Terms of Service and office-holding as well as on wider employment issues related to the Church context. Often this involves working closely with other NCI colleagues (including the Clergy HR team within the Ministry Development Team and The Legal Office). At times this support is straightforward and immediate (e.g. a quick email query) however it can also involve complex case-management support or long-term advice on HR matters or organisational development strategy. The team also delivers a programme of training and development for new Archdeacons.

Consultancy Services

As part of the national Church, the team provides additional HR resource and consultancy on a cost-effective, not-for-profit basis. This includes the [Clergy Transitions Service](#) which provides confidential, personal support for clergy who are at a vocational crossroad, or who are looking for a fresh opportunity. In addition, a significant part of the work also involves ad-hoc consultancy projects using the team's specific Church based HR expertise and via a network of trusted associate colleagues. Recent projects have included:

- **Reviewing** a diocese's recruitment **process** to ensure it is up to date and in line with best practice
- Providing **group coaching** for a cathedral team facing interpersonal and communication challenges
- Supporting **complex employee and clergy cases** including **investigations, employment law advice** as well as **policy creation** and updates
- Designing and implementing **development programmes** for diocesan staff (e.g. 'Personal and Professional Impact' 'Holding Difficult Conversations' 'Dignity at Work' and 'Coaching Skills for Managers')
- Sharing **learning and resources** from the NCIs **Belonging and Inclusion strategy** with dioceses and cathedrals
- Offering **individual coaching** to diocesan staff wanting to develop within their roles
- Conducting an independent '**lessons learned**' review following a complicated diocesan restructure

As experienced HR and organisational development professionals, the team is well-equipped to offer advice and additional resource across a wide range of strategic and operational people issues and are always open to exploring how to offer the most effective support.

The Church of England HR Network

Working closely with other NCI colleagues, the team provides support via the Church of England HR Network holding monthly meetings, online seminars, a Microsoft Teams channel and networking events to share best practice, raise common issues, cascade resources and to explore areas of HR practice within the Church. Any colleagues working in HR in the Church whether in a diocese, cathedral, chaplaincy or parish are welcome to join.

National People Initiatives

In addition to supporting colleagues across the wider Church, the team also works on a number of national, people related projects. This includes working with other NCIs teams (e.g. the Vision and Strategy team, the Church Commissioners, Safeguarding, the Racial Justice Team) as well as leading projects (such as a Bullying and Harassment initiative which will be rolled out nationally).

For more information, to set up informal conversations with the External Services team, or to connect with the Church of England HR Network, please email HRexternalservices@churchofengland.org and we will be pleased to explore how we can support you.

"It is great to have this resource as the facilitation enabled us to see differently. I would wholly recommend the HR External Service as the work was professionally led by someone who knew Cathedrals and how they operate", Cathedral Dean (following a group coaching programme).

More about the HR External Service

Who can access the HR External Service?

The team is pleased to offer HR support to anyone that needs it across the Church, in particular leaders (lay or clergy), HR practitioners or those wishing to think strategically about people issues.

As an HR practitioner within a diocese/cathedral, what support can the HR External Service offer me?

Through the Church of England HR Network, we are pleased to link colleagues with other HR professionals within the Church as well as with a network of external practitioners. The Network provides the central point for this support through the Microsoft Teams channel, monthly meetings, newsletters and annual development events. In addition, the team is available for more specific ad-hoc support or to provide resource for particular pieces of work.

Does the HR External Service charge for its support?

As a national HR team, there are some services that only we, as the national Church, can provide and as such we do not charge for this type of support (e.g. office holding queries, complex ecclesiastical employment issues). However, in order to maximise the resources of the team, some consultancy support (particularly work that could alternatively be provided by external suppliers) may be subject to fees although these will always be kept to a minimum and on a not-for-profit basis.

How does the HR External Service work with other NCI or Church organisations?

The Service sits within the national HR team and has close links with the Ministry Development Team, the Church Commissioners, the Archbishops’ Appointments and Vocations Team as well as the Safeguarding, Racial Justice, and Vision and Strategy teams. (For more detail about these teams and the NCIs, please see [National Church Institutions](#))

Should there be colleagues elsewhere in the NCIs that might be better positioned to support you, we are happy to explore this with you and introduce you to them or work collaboratively as needed.

Do you have any case studies of work that you’ve delivered?

Yes! Please find some case study examples below:

- [Psychometric reporting for high profile parish appointment](#)
- [Team development for clergy team](#)
- More coming soon...

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