

THE NOMINATION

PROCESS FOR

SUFFRAGAN BISHOPS

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1. Overview of process for choosing Suffragan Bishops

An overview of the process for appointments can be found [here](#).

2. Authorisation process

The Diocesan Bishop will need to:

- Ascertain whether he or she and the diocese wish to re-appoint to the Suffragan See
- Confirm with the Dioceses Commission that they support an appointment to the Suffragan See.

The Diocese Commission has the same role in relation to nominations to the ministry of Provincial Episcopal Visitor.

The Dioceses Commission has guidance notes for bishops and these will be provided to the Diocesan Bishop as soon as the vacancy is announced.

3. Appointment and role of the Bishop's Advisory Group

A small Advisory Group should be appointed to work confidentially with the Bishop throughout the appointments process. Different Bishops may wish to work with this group in different ways and it is important that the group's role is made clear to members at the outset.

The group should be compact (perhaps 4 -6 people) and consist of:

- Clergy and lay members drawn largely from the Bishop's Council, although the Bishop may wish to choose others if this would help bring diversity and different perspectives to the discussion
- A person outside the diocese with a national perspective who is able to see the role within the national scene. The appointing Bishop will need to consider who this might be
- In addition, for Area Bishops, there should be at least one representative from the geographical area in which they will serve
- The group for PEV's will include representatives from across the Province they serve.

The role of the group is to advise the Bishop during the selection process. The group will:

- Work with the Bishop in drawing up the role and person specification
- Assist the Bishop with the shortlisting of candidates
- Interview the candidates
- Agree the themes for feedback to candidates with the Bishop.

Members of the group will need to have sufficient time to commit to this process and also be prepared to receive training in good practice interviewing techniques should this be required.

It is recommended that Archdeacons, and Directors who will be working directly for the Suffragan Bishop, are not on the Advisory Group for their appointment, although arrangements should be made for them to meet the preferred candidates towards the end of the process and they may have a role in the briefing of any candidates.

The membership of the group should be reported to the Bishop's Council.

4. The role specification

Each role should have a clear written description of what is required, prepared by the Bishop working with the Advisory Group. This should be set out in a role specification. A possible template for this can be found [here](#). In drawing up this document, the Bishop and Advisory Group will also wish to take into account the role of bishops in the national church.

Prior to the completion of the role specification, the members of the Advisory Group or the Bishop should consult the following people in order to capture the full complexities of the role and the key challenges facing the appointed candidate.

- The present Suffragan Bishop
- The Bishop's senior staff
- Members of the Bishop's Council
- The diocese's General Synod members
- The chairs of the houses of clergy and laity of the diocesan synod
- The rural deans and lay chairs of the relevant deaneries
- Representatives of the local community and of other churches.

This may be either in written form, by asking them to write in with their views, or through face-to-face meetings.

The purpose of this consultation is to aid the Bishop's thinking. It is not necessary or desirable for the role specification to reflect everything that has been said. The Bishop will wish to ensure that the document sets clear priorities for the ministry of the new Suffragan Bishop.

Once the role specification has been finally drawn up by the Bishop it will be discussed by the senior staff and sent to the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments (ASA) for comment. The final version should be submitted to Bishop's Council for endorsement. In the event of disagreement, it is for the Diocesan Bishop to finalise the document.

5. Finding the candidates

5.1 Announcement of the vacancy and search

The vacancy will be announced in the church press and people will be invited to send in names of candidates for consideration. The announcement will also be sent to the groups listed on the previous page. A draft announcement can be found [here](#).

The Bishop will collate the names submitted from this and other sources (including the Advisory Group) and will liaise with the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments who will provide information on those who have already been identified as suitable for future episcopal ministry. The ASA will provide the paperwork as below to the Bishop to enable the identification of candidates from this pool who meet the requirements of the role. The Bishop will provide a long list of possible candidates to the Advisory Group (this tends to be 6 – 8 candidates) and they will assist in developing a short list for interview.

5.2 Information on candidates

Where individuals have been identified as suitable for future episcopal ministry, the following information is held on file by the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments:

- Register of Ministers form or a curriculum vitae
- Nomination form with comments from the Diocesan Bishop
- References from 3 referees
- Personal statement by the candidate on how he or she perceives their vocation in relation to episcopal ministry.

This information is made available to the Bishop to support long-listing and also to the Bishop's Advisory Group.

If a candidate for serious consideration emerges at this stage, for whom there is no paperwork available, the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments will contact the candidate and the candidate's Bishop to arrange for it to be collated.

5.3 Long list of names and shortlisting

The Bishop will collate names submitted and produce the long list for the Advisory Group to consider. They will then produce a shortlist of candidates to be interviewed. It is recommended that at least 2 candidates are interviewed.

The following paperwork will be made available to the Advisory Group to support them in shortlisting:

- Register of Ministers form or a curriculum vitae
- Nomination form with comments from the Diocesan Bishop
- References from 3 referees
- Personal statement by the candidate on their gifts and the development of his ministry.

An outline short listing pro-forma, which may assist this stage of the process, is set out [here](#).

If further information is required then the candidate's Diocesan Bishop or the ASA may be contacted. Referees should be not contacted for further information until the candidate has been advised that they have been short listed for interview.

5.4 Invitation to interview

The letter inviting candidates to interview will need to include the following information:

- An outline of the selection and any briefing process and the number of candidates to be seen
- The date, time and location of the interview and the names of the panel members
- The purpose of the interview (simply to explore issues or also to make a recommendation to the Bishop) and the role of the Advisory Group
- The next steps (e.g. dates for a one-to-one conversation with the Diocesan Bishop)
- Arrangements for the provision of further information
- The role specification and any other relevant documents.

5.5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Best endeavours should be taken to ensure that candidates are not in a position to discover the identity of others at any stage throughout the recruitment process. Candidates are clearly free to share their candidature but if others involved in the process share this information, it can cause difficulties for the candidate and their families. If the Diocesan Bishop is seeking additional references he or she may also wish to make it clear to referees that the request should be kept confidential.

5.6 Monitoring diversity

In order to monitor the contribution of selection and development policies to a diverse senior leadership in the Church, diversity monitoring information needs to be collected. This will be managed by the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments.

6. Notification to the Archbishop of the Province

The Archbishop of the province should be notified of those who have been shortlisted by the Bishop so that comments can be made at this stage.

The details provided will need to include the names of the candidates plus a brief summary of how they meet the requirements of the role.

7. Candidate briefing prior to interview

It is recommended that shortlisted candidates are given the opportunity to talk to somebody about the vacancy and the diocese prior to interview.

The Diocesan Bishop may wish to nominate a person who will meet with the candidates prior to interview and give them an outline of the diocese, role and current issues and priorities. This person will need to be kept in touch with the thinking of the Advisory Group so that they have a clear understanding of the challenges of the role. They will not take part in the interviews.

Some dioceses may use a group to brief candidates prior to interview. This will allow candidates to ask questions about the diocese. It should be made clear that this is not part of the assessment process.

8. The selection processes

8.1 Interview structure

All shortlisted candidates must be interviewed by the Advisory Group and the Diocesan Bishop before they can be nominated to the Crown.

The Diocesan Bishop will advise the Advisory Group of their role in the interview process. The Group may be invited to explore how the candidate might conduct the role, identifying strengths and areas of concern, or it might be requested to make a recommendation of a preferred candidate to the Bishop. It is vital that both the Group and the candidate are aware of the group's role. The Bishop may or may not choose to be present at this interview.

Interviews should be structured and appropriate for the level and kind of post. The Bishop will need to ensure that members of the panel are appropriately skilled and experienced to interview at this level. If required, the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments can provide some briefing/ training materials. Preparing and structuring the interview can help improve its ability to predict how a candidate will undertake the role and also assist in the comparison of candidates.

The interview will look at the role specification and the specific challenges of the role and consider the skills, experience and strengths of the candidates against these areas. It may also include an exploration of vocational issues relating to the candidates' individual ministry and how their calling and experience will

enable them to fulfil the needs of this particular role, or the Bishop may explore these at any subsequent one-to-one meeting. Often candidates have a meeting with the full Advisory Group followed by a one-to-one meeting with the Diocesan Bishop.

The Bishop or a nominated person will need to note the Advisory Group's evaluation of candidates, which will assist the Diocesan Bishop in their subsequent one-to-one meeting with the preferred candidate with feedback and with the induction of the successful candidate.

8.2 Additional selection methods

The interview is an important part of the selection process but it can also be useful to build up an understanding of a candidate's strengths and gaps against the profile via other means which may include the following:

i) *Presentations*

These are usually prepared in advance on a topic specified by the panel. They demonstrate ability to present, knowledge and lateral thinking and to communicate vision and ideas about areas of work relevant to the role.

ii) *Exposition of a biblical passage*

Candidates would be requested to prepare a brief talk on a particular biblical text. This would give insights into someone's teaching style, their ability to communicate theological ideas and to engage people.

iii) *Tests*

There are different schools of thought on the value of testing as part of a selection process. They can be useful as a way of identifying areas that it would be useful to explore further with candidates but it is important that they are used carefully. It is advisable to get professional advice if the use of tests is being considered and if the diocesan HR Advisor is not able to support this, the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments is available to do so.

8.3 Individual meeting with the Bishop

This may take place on the day or at a later stage, the Diocesan Bishop and any candidate(s) will wish to take time to explore how they would work and minister together. If at a later stage the Diocesan Bishop may wish to meet with only the preferred candidate or, if he or she is considering two candidates, he or she may wish to meet with them both. It is important that candidates are aware of the circumstances in which they are meeting the Bishop if they are invited to do so.

The Bishop will also explore vocational issues relating to the candidate(s)' individual ministry and how their calling and experience will enable them to fulfil the needs of the role of a Suffragan Bishop. The purpose of this meeting is for both the Diocesan Bishop and the candidate to ensure that they will be able to develop a successful and effective working relationship together.

Where a Suffragan Bishop is to have responsibility for a geographical area or a particular directorate, the relevant archdeacon(s) or director(s) should also meet with the nominated candidate(s), prior to them having their final meeting with the Bishop. It may be appropriate to offer this possibility to others with whom the Suffragan Bishop is expected to work closely (e.g. other diocesan staff whose work they may oversee). Such a meeting will be of assistance to the candidates in considering whether they would accept the appointment if offered. Those whom the candidate(s) meet should be given the opportunity to offer comments to the Diocesan Bishop who will decide what weight, if any, to place on them. Care should be taken not to confuse this opportunity with the role of the Advisory Group.

9. Offer and appointment

Once the Bishop has identified the candidate names, he or she will seek concurrence from the Archbishop on the decision received. One of the factors the Archbishop will consider in providing his support for the appointment will be that the process as set out has been followed. If the Archbishop concurs, the Diocesan Bishop will make a verbal offer to the preferred candidate, subject to a satisfactory medical examination and DBS check. The purpose of any medical is to ascertain whether there are any medical issues the Church and the candidate need to take into account on taking up the appointment.

Appropriate arrangements should be made for the preferred candidate to visit the house, have full information about the stipend and other financial details (including the expense of running the house) and to ensure they have a full understanding about the role, its challenges and benefits before deciding whether to accept the nomination.

The preferred candidate should be encouraged to consult, in confidence, with a limited number of people about the suitability of the appointment, including their Diocesan Bishop and spiritual director.

10. Next steps

10.1 Medical forms and DBS checks

The office of the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments will arrange for a medical examination and DBS check of the candidate. The appointments process cannot be continued until a satisfactory DBS disclosure has been received by the ASA office. The Bishop will need to bear in mind that occasionally this may result in a delay to the process. Please click [here](#) to open the Church of England's *Practice Guidelines: Safer Recruitment*.

10.2 Petition to the Crown; letter and supporting evidence

The petition to the Crown is submitted with a letter from the Archbishop of the Province supporting the candidate. This is prepared by the ASA office.

The Provincial Registrar will be in touch with the “recruiting” and “exporting” Diocesan Bishops to arrange for the Petition to the Crown to be prepared.

10.3 Announcement

The ASA office will liaise with the Diocesan Bishop, Downing Street and the candidate to find a suitable announcement date.

The Chair and the Diocesan Bishop will wish to ensure that the new Bishop has the appropriate support from the Diocesan Communications Officer at this stage.

10.4 Paperwork

On completion of the interview process, the Diocesan Bishop needs to ensure that:

- Any paperwork on candidates held by the Advisory Group is destroyed
- One set of paperwork on candidates is held on file for six months, at which point it should be destroyed

10.5 Feedback

Each candidate interviewed should be entitled to information as to why they have not been chosen. At the end of an interview process it is helpful if the panel agree the messages to be passed back to unsuccessful candidates. Feedback will either be done by the Bishop or someone delegated to do so on his behalf. A note on effective feedback can be found [here](#).