5.01 - Interview and Appointment – further information and a Guide to Good Practice

The interview process

- The interviews are a very important part of the process and must be conducted in a professional manner. The Patron or Bishop will chair the process and brief Parish Representatives of the procedure in advance of the interviews.
- If an interviewer already knows a candidate personally, or knows about the candidate, this should be declared to the other interviewees, so that they can be redacted from that interview.
- The object of the interview is to draw the best out of the candidate, and it should be as pleasant an experience as possible for all concerned. Remember that the candidates are also assessing whether they wish to work with you and it is not unknown for the preferred candidate to decline an appointment based on their experience.
- Questions need to be carefully thought about and every candidate asked the same questions. The Archdeacon will have prepared the questions, after discussion during the shortlisting process.
- Questions which concern the age, family, health or sexuality of any applicant must not be asked as part of the interview process.
- It should be understood that under the PBM process it is the Patron who appoints. The Bishop can exercise a veto if they have knowledge that there are concerns about the person and the parish representatives can veto if they can demonstrate that the chosen candidate does not fit the parish statement or profile. In most cases the Patron will only appoint following discussion and all will be content. As part of the discussion a patron will therefore often ask as the first question whether anyone present believes that any of the candidates were unappointable and why.
- Priests-in-Charge are appointed by the Bishop following discussion with the Patron(s) and parish representatives.
- Team Vicars are usually appointed by the Team Rector following discussion with the Bishop and Parish Representatives and the agreement of the Bishop. In some cases the Team Patrons also have patronage rights which will modify this process.
- For reasons of confidentiality, all printed application forms and interview notes will be collected in by the Archdeacon at the end of the interviews. The panel are also required to delete electronic copies of candidates’ application forms from their computers.

After the interviews: for appointments under the P(B)M

- Once it is agreed by all concerned that a post where the PBM applies should be offered, the Patrons will complete Form 38 with the name of the candidate they wish to present to the Bishop.
- The form will go to the representatives, who will be asked to sign to signify agreement. The form should then be returned to the Bishop. ***In practice it is usually possible to sign all forms after the interviews therefore saving a great deal of time.***
- If the parish representatives veto the candidate, they will be asked to inform the Archbishop of Canterbury of their reasons for doing so. This is very rare, as the whole purpose of the process is to agree, at the end of the interviews, on the appointment of a suitable candidate.

- Once the Bishop has received the forms a formal offer can be made to the successful candidate subject to the completion of all legalities including Safeguarding. The Bishop will make this offer in writing and acceptance requires a formal written response.

After the interviews: for appointments not under the P(B)M

- Where the P(B)M does not apply, the Bishop or Archdeacon will agree with the parish representatives and Patrons the name of the successful candidate.
- It is a requirement of the Teams and Groups Measure that other members of the Team are also consulted when it comes to the appointment of a Team Vicar.
- The Bishop will make any offer in writing and make it clear that this is subject to the completion of all legalities including Safeguarding. The offer requires a formal written response accepting the appointment.

A GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE AT INTERVIEWS

Before the interview

Do:

- Reread shortlisted applications alongside the job description and person specification, identifying any areas which need further clarification during interview.
- Plan for the interview to be structured consistently for every candidate: each individual should have the same opportunities to present themselvesand demonstrate their suitability for the job. This includes:
- Asking each candidate similar questions, to ensure consistency in candidate evaluation;
- Conducting each interview in similar circumstances, with the same panel if possible;
- Allowing an equal amount of time for each interview.
- Prepare the questions in advance, keeping them focused on the position and the candidate's qualifications and experience. Aim for open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".
- Prepare a document of interview questions, with space for notes on candidate responses and panel feedback.
- If possible, prepare an objective structured scoring system that can be used when evaluating candidates after the interviews.
- Be prepared for the candidates' own questions, and try to anticipate what additional information they may seek.
- Consider whether any adjustments need to be made to accommodate a candidate who has indicated a disability on the application form.

Don't:

- Go into an interview unprepared.
- Ask questions that are not relevant to the post, or could be perceived as discriminatory, e.g. questions related to the candidate's marital status, children/childcare, medical history etc.

During the Interview

Do:

- Conduct the interview in an environment that will allow candidates to give of their best. In particular, arrange for there to be no interruptions from visitors or the telephone.
- Show enthusiasm and professionalism to every candidate.
- Introduce the candidate to the members of the panel at the start of the interview.
- Give some brief background information about the Diocese and the job.
- Listen and make notes on salient points.
- Keep to a time frame, allowing candidates to ask any questions they may have.
- Ensure that candidates are familiar with the terms and conditions of the job, and that these are acceptable to them.
- Tell candidates what will happen next and when they can expect to hear the outcome of the interview.

Don't

- Accept any interruptions.
- Ask leading or potentially discriminatory questions (see *Before the interview*).
- Rely on your memory alone to record information about candidates' responses to questions!
- Engage in private conversation with other members of the panel during the interview.
- Give on-the-spot feedback or any indication of the likely outcome of the process.
- Refer to other candidates or interviews.
- Reduce the level of formality or professionalism for internal candidates.

After the Interview

Do:

- Write up/flesh out notes as soon as possible after the interview: this is for both the decision-making process and providing feedback to candidates if requested.
- Keep interview notes on file.
- Decide who to employ as soon as possible after the interviews, using a structured scoring system if possible.
- Inform all candidates of the outcome of the process within the expected time frame. Keep them informed if a decision is delayed for some reason.
- Be prepared to give reasons for rejection to unsuccessful candidates who ask.

Don't:

- Dispose of notes made during interviews other than by handing them to the chair.
- Keep candidates waiting for an outcome beyond the expected timeframe without some form of contact.
- Divulge information about candidates/interviews to other candidates.