

Racial Justice Officer (0.4 FTE)

With our network of parishes covering the country, we as the Church of England play an active role in national life, bringing an important Christian voice to the nation, as well as strengthening community life. The Diocese of Chester with its 266 parishes, 115 church schools and, at present, 18 chaplaincies, brings Christian influence to every corner of the area that we serve.

As a diocese, we have invested much time and thought in a process that clarifies our vision and determines our strategy in pursuit of this vision. Our vision is to be **Together in Christ, Sharing Hope**, a church that makes a difference to the 1.5 million people who live within our boundaries, believing that we are called to

- Growing, braver, fuller faith
- Blessing 1.5 million lives, one life at a time
- Transformative loving service (in practice)
- Engage locally, working together in loving generosity

The strategic context

In order to implement our vision the institutions of the diocese are exploring four streams of work: growing healthy missional churches; promoting diverse and representative missional engagement; developing new worshipping communities; and developing leadership and ministry that enables such growth. In all of these streams, our ability to engage with, include and learn with those of Global Majority Heritage (GMH) is key. Our desire is to minister to the 1.5 million people of the diocesan area who do not have a connection to church, and we recognise that we need to be shaped by those who do not yet feel that they belong.

The Context in terms of Racial Justice

The Diocese of Chester is a mix of rural, urban, town and suburban contexts. Whilst there are diverse communities, predominantly in our more disadvantaged parishes, the Diocese as a whole is a predominantly white community with around 4.6% of the population of 1.65m being of Global Majority Heritage. We do not have the data to know whether our congregations are representative of the communities they serve, but our general impression is that they do not, especially in our more diverse areas. This impression is confirmed by the marked contrast between our congregations and our church schools, which are substantially more diverse. Moreover, traditionally conservative cultures, both in the church and wider society, mean that culture change to become more diverse is a complex and contested arena. There is a growing understanding of what it means to embrace difference and demonstrate radical welcome, but there is much that still needs to be done in this area.

The Opportunity

The work of bringing about the culture change that we require has so far been led by the Race and Ethnicity Forum. They, aided by members of the Bishop's staff team, have taken significant steps, but are very aware of the limitations they face and the scale of the work that needs to be done. The employment of a Racial Justice Officer (RJO) is intended to add significantly to their capacity to bring about the change that we require as a diocese.

Role

The role will give equal weight to two areas of work, enabling churches to reach diverse communities more effectively, and supporting the culture change required by *From Lament to Action*. Therefore:

1. In support of our strategic goals as a diocese the RJO will advise and resource parishes, schools and chaplaincies, enabling them to include people of GMH at every level.
2. The RJO will, with the Race and Ethnicity Forum, encourage and catalyse the Diocese to adopt and implement recommendations included in *From Lament to Action*. It will do this through:
 - looking at policies, strategies, practices and work of diocesan bodies and officers, as well as at data regarding diversity and inclusion
 - offering workable suggestions for diocesan policies or initiatives
 - undertaking particular tasks, as requested by the Race and Ethnicity Forum, the Outreach Committee or Diocesan Synod
 - furthering the work of the diocese and the aims of *From Lament to Action* in parishes, schools and chaplaincies by producing resources, enabling events or offering support in other ways.
3. Work with the Race and Ethnicity Forum and others to plan, curate and roll out an appropriate unconscious bias and diversity training programme, using a team of volunteer trainers, including pathways for senior leaders, for those who have a role in discernment and formation processes and for those who sit on parish appointment panels.
4. At a Diocesan and national level the RJO will:
 - Connect with, and participate in, the national Racial Justice Officer network on issues relevant to the role.
 - Provide relevant committees and groups with data and reports, undertaking analysis and research where required.
 - Play a leading role in helping to implement the overall diocesan vision and strategy.

Relationships

The RJO will be part of the Outreach Department and will report to the Director of Outreach. They will speak directly with the Bishop of Birkenhead and the Chair of the Race and Ethnicity Forum, and will work with people from across the diocese to see the goals of *From Lament to Action* reached and our culture changed.

This will include

Diocesan Race and Ethnicity Forum
Department of Human Resources
Department for Ministry
Outreach Committee
Department for Education
Cathedral
Bishop's House

Salary

£13,600 - £14,400 for an 0.4 post of 14 hours per week (equivalent to £34,000 - 36,000 p.a. for a full-time role)

We are committed to equality of opportunity and to being a place where all belong. We therefore particularly encourage applications from candidates who are likely to be underrepresented in our workforce. These include people from Global Majority Heritage backgrounds.

Date: June 2024

Note – this job description does not form part of your Contract of Employment.