



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Information for Candidates

August 2025

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF NORTHAMPTON



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WELCOME



Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Operating Officer for the Diocese of Northampton. This is a pivotal appointment in the life of our diocesan family, one that calls for a person of competence, dedication, and, above all, a heart for service in the model of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

The Church's mission flows from the Gospel itself – to proclaim Christ, to build up His Body, and to be a sign of God's Kingdom in our world. In the Diocese of Northampton, we seek to live this out as a vibrant, missionary diocese where every parish, school, and ministry contributes to the joyful witness of the Good News. Our “living stones” – the faithful people of God across Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Slough – are at the heart of this mission. Your work will be to ensure that our diocesan operations enable them to flourish.

This role is one of servant leadership. The Chief Operating Officer will resource, structure, and steward our administrative, financial, and operational life so that our priests, deacons, religious, and lay leaders are freed to focus on their pastoral and evangelising mission. In doing so, you will directly complement the ministry of the Bishop and his principal co-workers, ensuring that the mission entrusted to me to lead for our diocese is translated into practical action.

We live in a time of global instability – economically, politically, and socially – yet the Church is called to be a steady and faithful presence in the midst of change. Through wise management, transparent governance, and a prayerful attentiveness to God's call, you will help provide stability for our diocesan structures, ensuring that our parishes and ministries remain resilient and well-supported for the challenges and opportunities ahead.



This is not simply a managerial post – it is a ministry of service at the heart of the Church's mission. If you have the skills to guide complex operations and the heart to serve the people of God, I invite you to consider prayerfully this role. Together, may we continue to build a diocese that is missionary in spirit, rich in faith, and alive in hope.

Bishop David Oakley





OUR MISSION



The Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton exists to share the Good News of Jesus Christ across Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and that part of Berkshire north of the River Thames.

Rooted in our identity as Eucharistic communities, we draw strength from the grace of the Sacraments to live as faithful witnesses of Christ's love. We are committed to taking the Gospel beyond the walls of our churches, reaching out to our local communities with compassion, hope, and joy.

In the spirit of evangelisation, we seek to accompany all people on their journey of faith, inviting them into a deeper relationship with God. Through social action projects, we stand alongside the most vulnerable and marginalised, working to bring about justice, dignity, and care for those in need.

Guided by the Holy Spirit and inspired by the example of the saints, we strive to be a living sign of God's Kingdom in our time and place.



ABOUT THE DIOCESE

The Catholic Diocese of Northampton covers the traditional counties of Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, together with the town of Slough, a Unitary Authority within Berkshire.

With its southern edge resting on the Thames and its northern tip in the East Midlands, it is by no means the smallest English diocese. There are 69 principal parishes with another 26 “satellite churches”, chapels of ease, and a few more Mass centres in private schools and other institutions. They are served by 48 active diocesan priests, assisted by 12 active priests from other dioceses and 18 from religious orders.

The diocese has 29 schools at primary/infant/junior level, six secondary schools, one 4-19 VA through-school, one private primary school, a private prep school, and one private girls’ boarding through-school. Between them they educate some 20,700 pupils.

The diocese is a registered charity, The Northampton Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, and is also a registered company. The Chief Operating Officer will be the Honorary Secretary to that corporation. There is one active trading subsidiary, RCDN Property Services Ltd, which provides project management for school projects. There are separate Trustees’ Property, Investment and Health and Safety Committees.

More information

Visit the Diocese [website](#)

Read our latest [Financial Statements](#) for the year ending 31st March 2024.





ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Following his appointment as Bishop of Northampton in 2020, Bishop David Oakley introduced a three-fold vicariate structure based on the roles of **Priest** (Clergy), **Prophet** (Mission), and **King** (Governance). Two years later, after our diocesan synodal activity as part of the Synod of the Universal Church, a fourth vicariate—**Servant** (Synodal Listening)—was added. The Vicariates offer a motivation of work for the departments hosted within them.

Each vicariate is led by an Episcopal Vicar appointed by the Bishop. Together, these four priests, along with the Vicar General, form the **Bishop's Council**. The Bishop's Council advises the Bishop on all aspects of diocesan life and serves as his primary sounding board.

Diocesan Trustees hold responsibility for governance and compliance, ensuring the effective stewardship of charitable resources in order to fulfil the Bishop's vision for the diocese. The Bishop chairs the full Trustee Board meetings. Several trustee sub-committees oversee specific areas, including finance, risk and audit, safeguarding, property, education, and clergy welfare. The Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Communications attend the full trustee meetings as executive representatives.

The **Chief Operating Officer** ensures that the operational practices of the diocese are productive, efficient and compliant. They attend most sub-committee meetings of the trustees and the full board meetings, agreeing the agenda with the Bishop and take overall responsibility for the operational policies and procedures.

The **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** consists of diocesan employees who lead the various departments. Their role is to implement decisions made by the Bishop's Council. Most SLT members report to both a line manager and a clerical lead. Many clerical leads are members of the Bishop's Council, enabling them to liaise effectively with the SLT and provide guidance.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible to	Bishop of Northampton
Location	St Thomas Centre, Marriott Street, Northampton, NN2 6AW and travel within the Diocese and occasionally beyond
Working hours	35 hours per week
Contract	Full-time, permanent
Salary	£85,000 – £100,000 per annum

Role purpose

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will provide strategic and operational leadership across the Diocese, with a particular focus on the effective management of property, land, and other physical assets. The COO will ensure that Diocesan operations support the mission of the Church, are financially sustainable, and are compliant with legal and regulatory requirements. This role is pivotal in safeguarding and enhancing the Diocese's Mission and the supporting physical estate for current and future generations.

Main duties

Strategic leadership

- Work with the Bishop, the Bishops Council, the Council of Laity and the Trustees to create an effective strategy. To assist with the continuous review, development and implementation of that Diocese strategy to enable us to deliver the Bishop's vision and the mission of the Church.
- Lead the operational strategy of the Diocese, aligning resources and infrastructure with its pastoral and mission priorities.



- Act as a key advisor to the Bishop and Trustees on operational, legal, safeguarding, educational and property matters.
- Develop and implement a Diocesan-wide property strategy, including acquisition, disposal, maintenance, and development.
- Lead the Senior Leadership Team ensuring co-ordination, sharing of priorities, together with the appropriate clerical leads (e.g. Mission, Caritas, Education).
- Promote a positive workplace culture that aligns with the Diocese's values and mission.
- Ensure the Trustee Board Sub-Committees are supported with sufficient resources and report in a timely manner.
- Ensure positive internal and external communications.

Property and asset management

- Oversee the management of all diocesan properties, including churches, schools, presbyteries, retirement properties for clergy, administrative and other buildings.
- Support and engage with the Synodal Discernment Process by Pastoral area ensuring all relevant information is available in a timely manner and the resulting plans are financially robust and integrated into the overall Diocesan planning.
- Ensure compliance with health and safety, planning, environmental, and heritage regulations.



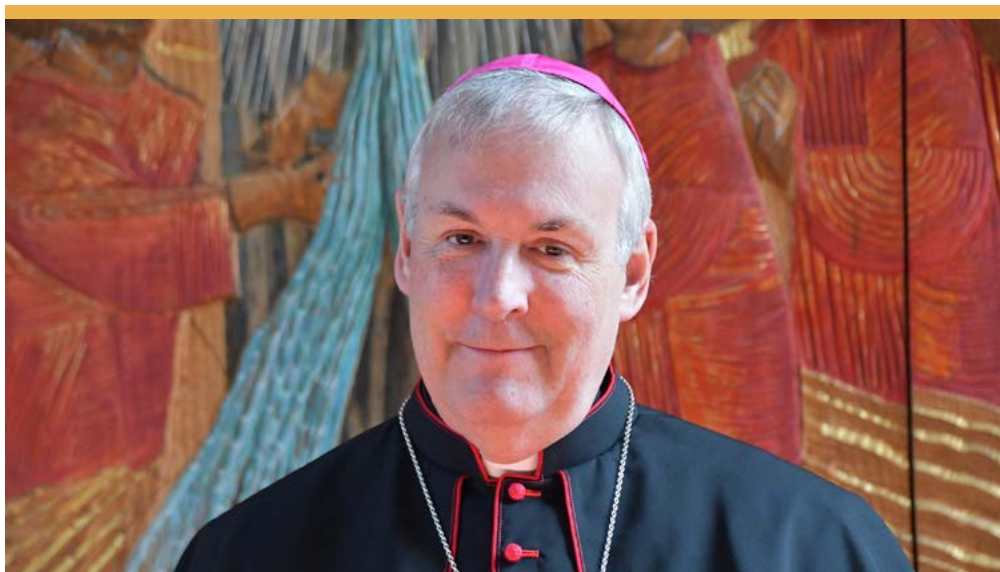
- Lead on capital projects, including refurbishments, new builds, and disposals, ensuring value for money and mission alignment.
- Maintain an accurate asset register and ensure appropriate insurance and risk management practices are in place.

Operational oversight

- Manage central services including HR, IT, legal, facilities, communications and property.
- Ensure robust systems and processes are in place for effective governance and operational delivery.
- Lead and support a team of professionals, employees, contractors and volunteers across the Diocese.
- Engage with colleagues from other Dioceses to ensure and develop cost optimization opportunities at in Inter-Diocese / National level.

Financial and legal compliance

- Work closely with the Chief Financial Officer to ensure operational budgets are aligned with strategic priorities.
- Ensure all property transactions and contracts are legally compliant and in the best interests of the Diocese.
- Manage (non-financial) filing requirements with the Charity Commission including the reporting of Safeguarding incidents.



- Liaise with external legal, planning, and property advisors as required.
- Liaise with HR, IT, Health & Safety ensuring legal compliance.
- Lead the IT strategy for the Diocese ensuring a comprehensive risk analysis and management of day to day operations and evolving threats.
- Manage the Human Resources strategy including pay recommendations, employee recruitment and handling of any disputes.
- Manage the Home Office visa immigration process for incoming clergy.

Stakeholder engagement

- Build strong relationships with parishes, schools, local authorities, volunteers and other Diocesan partners.
- Support clergy and parish teams in managing local assets and facilities, budgets and best practice.
- Represent the Diocese in external forums and negotiations related to property and operations.
- Lead the production of the Annual Diocesan Report to parishioners.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

As the Chief Operating Officer includes the role of Diocesan Finance Officer under Canon Law, the postholder must fulfil the requirements of ecclesiastical office under the Canon Law of the Catholic Church. The post is therefore subject to the occupational requirement that the holder is a practicing Catholic under Part 1 of Schedule 9 of the Equality Act.

Essential

- Proven experience in senior operational leadership, ideally within a complex or multi-site / multi-dimensional organisation.
- Strong background in property and asset management, including capital projects and facilities oversight.
- Excellent knowledge of legal, regulatory, and compliance issues related to property and charity operations.
- Strong leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively with clergy, trustees, and lay staff.

Desirable

- Experience in the charity, education, or faith-based sector.
- Relevant professional qualifications (e.g. RICS, facilities management, project management, health & safety).

Personal attributes

- Committed to the mission and values of the Catholic Church.
- Strategic thinker with a practical, hands-on approach.
- High integrity, discretion, and professionalism.
- Empathetic and collaborative leadership style.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Contract

This is a permanent, full-time appointment. Nominal hours are 35 hours per week. Overtime will not be paid but time off in lieu may be taken.

Pension

Diocesan Personal Pension arrangement matching personal contribution up to 4% of salary.

Annual leave

27 days holidays in addition to usual public holidays.





HOW TO APPLY

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact our recruitment partners, NFP Consulting:

Simon Lloyd Director | NFP Consulting
07961 988 523 simon.lloyd@nfpconsulting.co.uk



Application is by way of CV and a Supporting Statement, which should concentrate on your motivations and evidencing how your experience and skills meet the requirements. As a general guide your Supporting Statement should be around 1,000 words or two sides of A4.

Closing date: Monday 15th September

Selection process

There is a two-stage interview process.

Stage 1: Week beginning 22nd September

First round of screening interviews conducted by NFP Consulting.

Candidate taken forward from the first interviews will be invited to complete an online psychometric exercise in the form of a personality questionnaire.

Stage 2: Date to be confirmed

The formal panel interview with the Bishop and trustees will include a pre-prepared presentation task and there will also be the opportunity for you to meet with key stakeholders.



Accessibility

Please let us know if you have any special requirements which we might need to consider in relation to any aspect of the selection process, e.g. application process, attending interview, completing online psychometric exercises. Any requests will not be taken into account in the selection process.

