



Chief Operating Officer

Candidate brief



May 2026



ARCHDIOCESE *of*
SOUTHWARK

Contents

3	Welcome
5	Our Diocesan mission
7	Education Service
8	About the Archdiocese
9	Governance
9	For more information
10	Organisational chart
11	Context for the appointment
13	Job description
17	Person specification
19	Terms and conditions
20	How to apply





Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming our next Chief Operating Officer for the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Centred on Jesus Christ, the Archdiocese of Southwark will evangelise by helping people to grow in faith and to live in hope. Collectively we can change our world for the better by imitating Christ in showing love, justice, and peace to all. Our mission is to invite people to know the Lord Jesus who offers us life in its fullness.

We are seeking to appoint a Chief Operating Officer who is passionate about this mission and who can provide the leadership that will drive us forward in our work to be a Missionary Diocese.

United in our diversity, our Archdiocese is to be a home for anyone who yearns to know God's love and to hear God's word, particularly through the sacraments. We aspire to nurture everyone's vocation, to support family life, and to offer healing and support to those who are broken.

Caritas Southwark is our response to the increasing need in our communities, with a particular focus on supporting young people at risk of knife crime, caring for the elderly, tackling food poverty and helping migrants and refugees. Our Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion facilitates engagement with marginalised communities and promotes opportunities for growth in understanding matters of diversity and inclusion.

I am immensely proud of the 162 Catholic Schools in our Archdiocese and the work they are doing to educate and ground our children in the Catholic faith. And our 175 parishes do extraordinary work serving their local communities.

Working in partnership, within and beyond our Church, we will mature in Christian faith and discipleship, thereby making our contribution to the beauty of God's kingdom and the common good of our world. As Chief Operating Officer you will be able to support this mission and put your faith into action, helping those who need it most.



**THE VERY REVEREND
JOHN WILSON**

Archbishop of Southwark



There is much to do and much to be excited about. So, if you want to be part of an organisation whose mission is centred on Christ, accompanying people on their journey with Him then please apply.

With prayers,

The Very Reverend John Wilson

Archbishop of Southwark



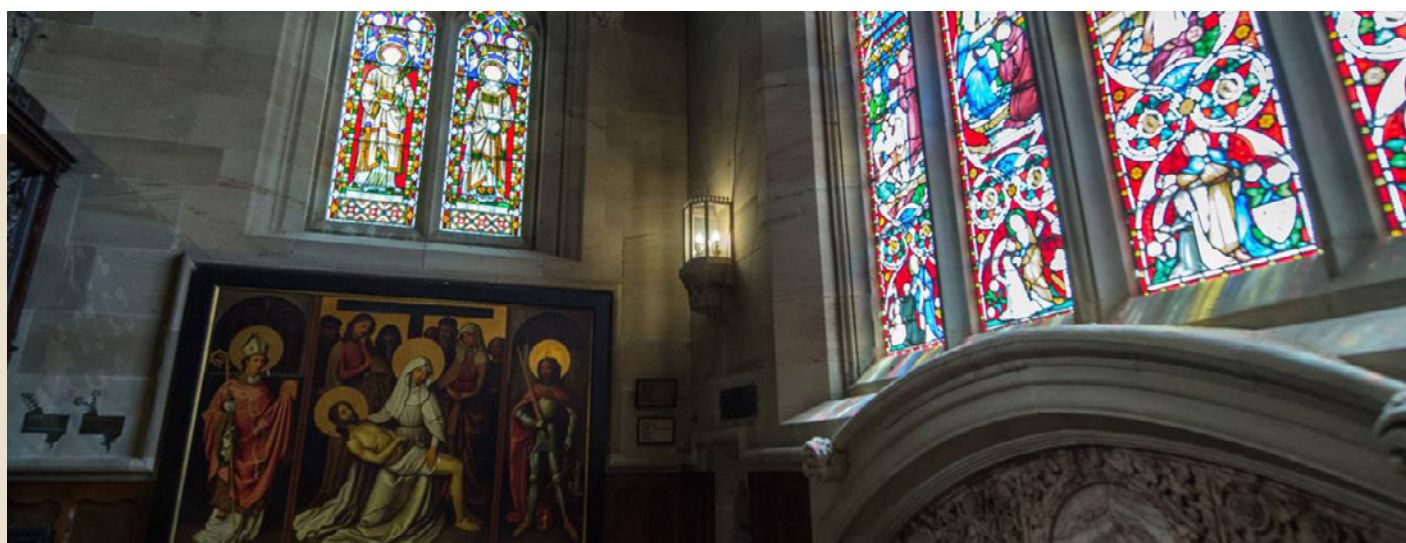
Our Diocesan mission

Our aim is to serve the grassroots mission of the Church, based on our conviction of faith. Inspired by the Patroness of our Archdiocese, the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived without sin, we strive to offer our unconditional 'yes' to serving the Lord by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ, pointing to her Son, the Lord Jesus, as our endless source of hope, joy and salvation.

The Archdiocese is currently engaged in a diocesan renewal process, Called to Bear Fruit, which seeks to equip parishes with the vision, leadership, resources and structures needed to become growing communities of missionary disciples. This transformation process forms part of a wider call to pastoral conversion, moving from self-preservation to evangelisation, and may also lead to structural changes which will require prayerful discernment, synodal listening, and sensitive but proactive and effective change management.

Our passion is to share God's love for all people, encouraging encounter with the Lord Jesus, which is why our vision is to be an evangelising and missionary Archdiocese which puts faith into action.

The Archdiocese of Southwark is a diverse community of Catholics, striving for fullness of life in God through love, faith and action. Hope is rooted in the heart of the Christian Gospel, where God's plan for his people echoed through the words of the prophets for many thousands of years until the birth of Jesus.





Christ's love was so great that it redeemed our world through the Cross, where sin and death were transformed to new life. We therefore strive to live out the Great Commandments of Jesus to love God and one another.

**THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK SEEKS TO PROCLAIM
AND LIVE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST BY:**

- Sharing the source and summit of our joy through the regular celebration of the Eucharist; the living symbol of Christ's life, death and resurrection, and God's redeeming love for all of mankind
- Supporting and strengthening the sacramental life of our 175 Catholic parishes, who are the core of Catholic life and faith in our Archdiocese
- Promoting excellent Catholic education in our 162 Catholic schools and colleges through the work of Southwark Catholic Education Service
- Supporting evangelisation, formation and catechesis in parishes through the work of the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis, primarily through Some Definite Service
- Protecting the vulnerable in our community through the Safeguarding Team and Safeguarding Committee, thereby promoting the human dignity of all people
- Promoting a society based on justice, fraternal love and dignity for all people through Caritas Southwark
- Engaging with marginalised groups, promoting diversity and ensuring all are welcome and included in the Church Community



We want our parishes and schools across South London and Kent to be ever more missionary in celebrating and sharing our Catholic faith. This requires reaching out with the joy of the Gospel in all we say and do.

We desire to work together as clergy, consecrated people and laity in promoting flourishing and welcoming communities of inspired worship, accessible formation and selfless service.

We declare our discipleship of the Lord Jesus by supporting food banks, assisting refugees, helping the homeless, caring for vulnerable and isolated people, promoting peace and unity, building harmonious relationships through understanding and forgiveness.

Education Service

Our Education Service is a family deeply committed to supporting the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through our primary and secondary Catholic Schools and all other forms of Catholic higher education. In our institutions, we support our children and parents from diverse backgrounds through various forms of formation and concern ourselves with their holistic well-being. Ours is a community where everyone is welcome, valued, and supported to flourish.

Education remains vital in forming the human person by teaching us how to live well now to live with God for all eternity. We are pleased our schools – and the Catholic Academy Trusts with which they are increasingly situated – serve both the faith community and society by educating children, young people, and adults to contribute to the common good by becoming dynamic and caring members of the communities in which they live.

www.rcaoseducation.org.uk



About the Archdiocese

The Archdiocese of Southwark consists of three Episcopal Areas: South-West London, South-East London and Kent. Our clergy and lay-faithful serve and worship Christ throughout 20 deaneries, 175 parishes and 162 schools across the South-East of England.

Southwark is where English Christianity was born, through St Augustine, who, following the commission of St Gregory the Great, arrived at the Isle of Thanet in 597 AD. He went on to become the first Archbishop of Canterbury, receiving a pallium remotely from the Holy See: an ecclesiastical vestment bestowed upon Metropolitan Archbishops as a symbol of their conferred jurisdictional authorities.

Today, Southwark consists of range of diverse communities from inner London and suburban parishes to coastal and rural churches. Southwark's rich history continues to evolve under the dynamic pastoral leadership of Archbishop John Wilson, who invites all to embrace social justice by putting their faith into action, to and become part of an evangelising and missionary Archdiocese that shares the Good News of Jesus Christ.





Governance

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was established by a constitution dated 16 May 2017. On 6 October 2017, the assets and liabilities of Roman Catholic Diocese of Southwark Diocesan Trust registered Charity number 235468 were transferred into the CIO.

The CIO is governed by the Board of Trustees which currently has eight members and consist of both Clerical and Lay Trustees. The Clerical Trustees are appointed for their expertise in parochial, spiritual, and pastoral matters. The Lay Trustees are appointed for their expertise in a number of different areas such as finance, technology and safeguarding.

The Archbishop is empowered to appoint and remove all Trustees.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for formulating the strategies and policies of the CIO. There are five sub-committees of the Board: Finance, Audit and Risk; Property, Health & Safety; Safeguarding; Education and Investments.

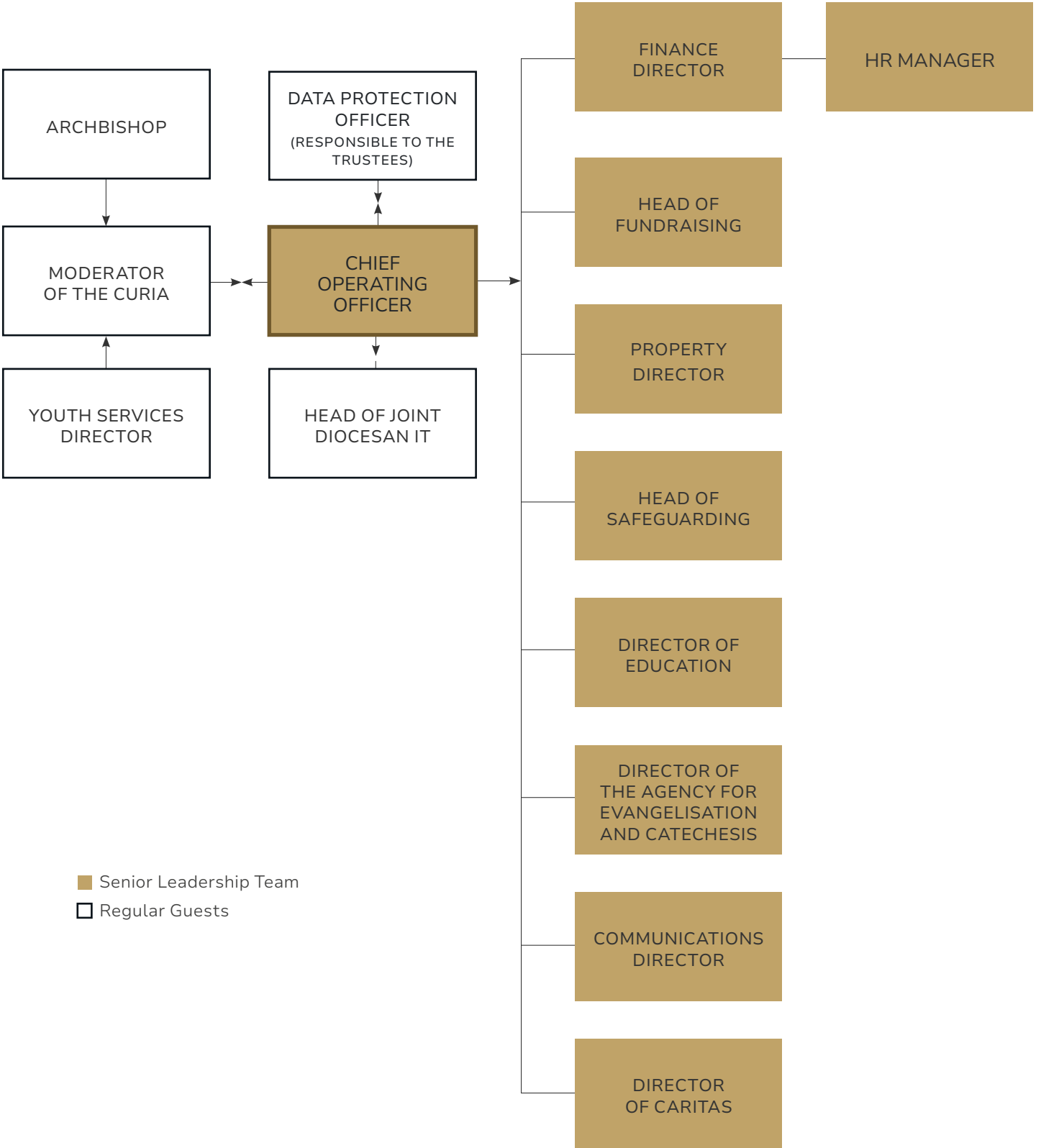
For more information

There is a wealth of information on our [main website](#) detailing the extent of our work and governance arrangements.

Download our latest [Annual Report](#).

Organisational chart

RC ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK



Context for the appointment

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is accountable to the Archbishop and the Trustee Board, but the Archbishop delegates operational and day to day oversight of the work of the COO to the Vicar General (VG) and Moderator of the Curia. Therefore, the COO and the VG must form collaborative working arrangements.

The primary role of the charity board, the COO and the administrative structure is to ensure the good running of the charity and compliance with charity and civil law requirements and that the charity is fit to support the missionary purpose and priorities of the Archbishop. The latter is the responsibility of the Archbishop supported by the Archbishop's Council (ABC) which comprises the senior clerical leadership of the Archdiocese. The COO is a member of the ABC.

The Board Sub-Committees are key vehicles of board oversight and policy development. The VG chairs the Finance, Audit and Risk sub-committee, the Property Health & Safety sub-committee and is vice chair of the Safeguarding sub-committee. Sub-committees may also include other clergy, lay trustees and independent experts in the field.

The Board comprises five clerical and four lay Trustees. From time to time the COO may work with the lay trustees individually or in a task group to explore specific issues in order to use the expertise they bring.



The COO needs to work collaboratively with all clergy, who have the status of office holders and not employees, and who are key stakeholders in developing policy and implementing change. Engagement and consultation mechanisms, including those described in canon law, need to be utilised such as the College of Consultors and the Council of Priests.

The COO needs to ensure excellent engagement with parishes, and that the Curial administration has credibility with them, is supportive of the work of parishes and is alive to their needs and the issues they are facing.

The COO needs to be aware of the context of canon law in decision making, resource management and policy development.

In implementing change the COO needs to be competent in working collaboratively through a structure which is reliant upon office holders and volunteers, does not have all the levers found in more conventional governance arrangements and has a culture of slower decision-making.





Job description

Job title	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible to	Archbishop and Trustee Board
Contract	Full-time, permanent
Salary	IRO £120,000 pa
Location	London, SE1 (with travel across the Archdiocese and wider as required)





Role purpose

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will provide strategic and operational leadership across the Archdiocese. The COO will ensure that Archdiocesan 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 Archdiocese's Mission and the supporting physical estate for current and future generations.

Key responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Work with the Archbishop, the Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, the Archbishop's Council and the Trustees to create an effective strategy. To assist with the continuous review, development and implementation of that Archdiocesan strategy to enable delivery of the Archbishop's vision and the mission of the Church.
- Lead the operational strategy of the Archdiocese, aligning resources and infrastructure with its pastoral and mission priorities.
- Act as a key advisor to the Archbishop and Trustees on operational, financial, legal, safeguarding, educational and property matters.
- Lead the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) ensuring co-ordination, sharing of priorities, together with the appropriate clerical leads (e.g. Youth, Caritas, Education).
- Promote a positive workplace culture that aligns with the Archdiocese'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.
- Ensure compliance with health and safety, planning, environmental, and heritage regulations.
- Oversee 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 Caritas, the AEC, Youth, Fundraising, HR, IT, Communications, Safeguarding, 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 Archdiocese.
- Engage with colleagues from other dioceses to ensure and develop cost optimisation opportunities at an inter-diocesan / national level.

Financial and legal compliance

- Work closely with the Finance Director, 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 Archdiocese.
- Manage (non-financial) filing requirements with the Charity Commission including the reporting of Serious Incidents.
- Liaise with external legal, planning, and property advisors as required.
- Liaise with HR, IT, Health & Safety ensuring legal compliance.
- Oversee the IT strategy for the Archdiocese, 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.



Stakeholder engagement

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



Person specification

Essential

- A practising and committed member of the Catholic Church with a good understanding of its teaching and structures.
- Proven experience in senior operational leadership, ideally within a complex or multi-site / multidimensional organisation, including management of significant budgets.
- Strong background in change management.
- Excellent knowledge of legal, regulatory, and compliance issues related to property and charity operations.
- Financial acumen – proven understanding of complex accounts and financial management to support the charity.
- Strong leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively with clergy, trustees, and lay staff.

Desirable

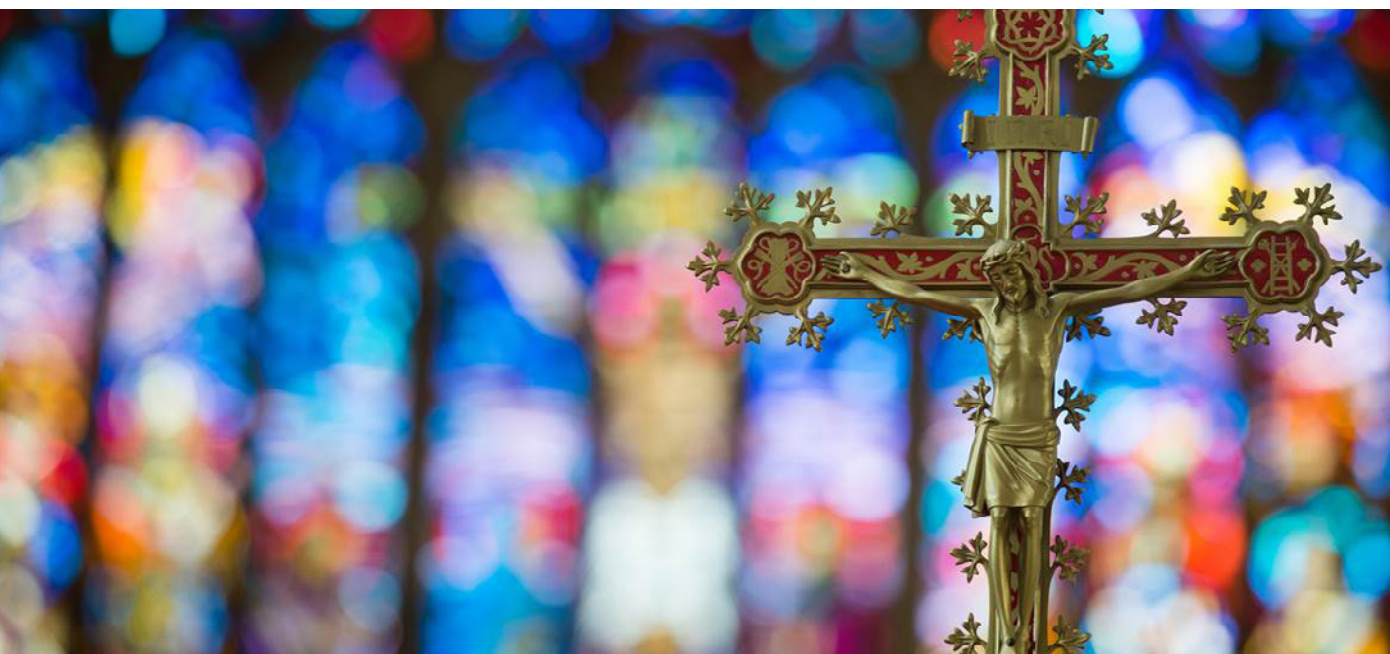
- Experience in the charity, education, or faith-based sector.
- Relevant professional qualifications.





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.
- Resilient.
- Natural interest in global and national current affairs and their potential impact on the Catholic Church.





Terms and conditions

Hours

36 days holiday pa including Bank Holidays, Christmas shutdown and Maundy Thursday

Benefits

NEST Pension + salary sacrifice for additional pension contributions

Employee Assistance Programme including mental and physical health support (e.g. online GP appointments), financial and legal support, etc.





How to apply

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact our recruitment partner, NFP Consulting:

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



Please apply online with Word Documents at:

www.nfpconsulting.co.uk/rcaos

Application is by way of CV with a Supporting Statement that should set out your motivations for applying and how your work experience to date meets the scope of the responsibilities. As a general guide, your Supporting Statement should be around two sides of A4.

Closing date: Rolling applications

Accessibility

Please let us know if you have any special requirements which we might need to consider in relation to the application process and attending interview. Any requests will not be taken into account in the selection process.