



**Archdeacon of
Sunderland**
Recruitment Pack

 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
DIOCESE OF DURHAM | BLESSING OUR COMMUNITIES IN JESUS' NAME

A Message from the Acting Bishop of Durham, the Rt Revd Sarah Clark

Dear Sister/Brother in Christ

Thank you for being part of this discernment of the person called by the Lord Jesus Christ to be the next Archdeacon of Sunderland. This person will be central to the implementation of our vision of Transformation for our Diocese, which seeks the well-being and flourishing of all our parishes and people. This is truly an opportunity to make a difference to the witness and worship of the people of God in Durham Diocese and especially in the Archdeaconry of Sunderland.

While the news that the Bishop of Durham designate has laid down that nomination is of course disappointing, it has also given us renewed clarity as a Leadership Team that we must move forward with steadfast purpose in our stewardship of the Diocese. This includes, but isn't confined to, the implementation of our Transformation programme for which we have received significant national funding, demonstrating real confidence in our vision for growth.

We have looked steadily at the challenges we face and our Vacancy in See statement is clear about these. I believe that word of Christ to us at this time is **'Take heart; it is I; do not be afraid (Matt 14:22-32)**. We are in a season where we need to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus Christ and have courage as we press on together.

We are searching for a colleague who will bring courageous and creative spiritual leadership to the role of Archdeacon of Sunderland, joining us as a colleague on the Way. Durham Diocese, shaped by the Northern Saints, with our ancient Cathedral of prayer at the centre of the Diocese, is a special place to minister. My own experience is that these people and these places in the North East have a presence which captures the heart and enables us to be at home as we serve God.

In praying for a new Archdeacon of Sunderland we are looking for someone who has a sense of call to be here, with us and part of this vision and new future. Together we pray hopefully

Loving God, guiding the people of Durham Diocese faithfully through the years:

*We thank you for saints who have marked our path,
young and old, known and unknown, from all places and in all walks of life.*

Help us to find your way in our generation:

transformed by your truth, sharing your life, blessing our communities.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

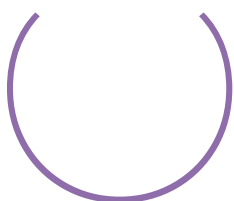
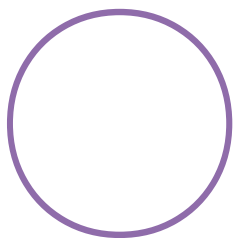
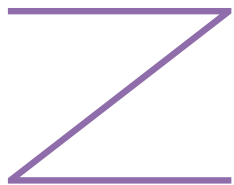
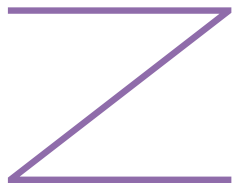
Amen



We look forward to meeting together and sharing in this with you.

+Sarah Clark

Acting Bishop of Durham



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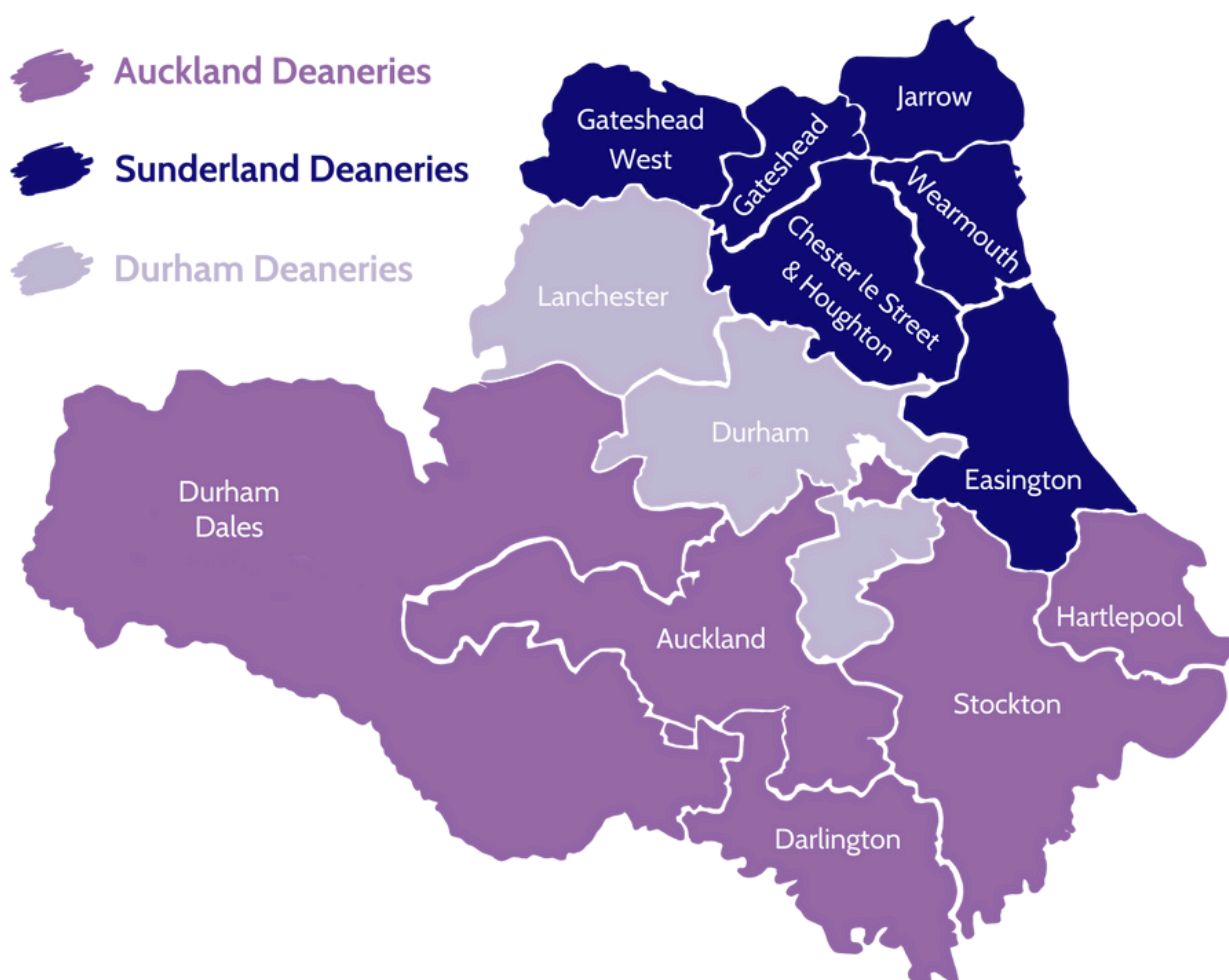
The Diocese of Durham

The Region of Durham Diocese

Our Geography and Heritage

Durham Diocese is an area of varied geography, stretching from the Tyne to the Tees and from the Dales to the Sea.

The Diocese has a proud Christian heritage, with a history spanning more than a millennium, which is reflected in our traditions and our attitude: continuing to faithfully serve Jesus in a challenging new era as we have done for many generations.



The Diocese of Durham

Our Communities

Durham Diocese has several significant population centres including Sunderland, Gateshead, Durham, Darlington and Stockton. The Diocese is home to both rural and post-industrial communities, the majority of which are former mining towns, most of which tend to be close-knit.



Gospel Singing workshop

A significant number of these communities face real issues of deprivation – in all its guises. Over half of the parishes in the Diocese serve communities within the lowest 20% of the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) nationally; a third are in the lowest 10%. The impact of this is experienced across all facets of life: health inequalities, mortality rates, child poverty, unemployment and adequate housing are all very real and stark challenges. The [NE Child Poverty Commission's February 2024 report "No Time to Wait"](#) is a sombre account of the experiences facing our region's children.

In spite of these challenges, or perhaps because of them, we have incredibly strong communities in the Diocese, with people often going above and beyond to serve their neighbours as they would wish to be served.

Our Region

There are two universities wholly within Durham Diocese - Durham and Sunderland - as well as Teesside University having one campus in Darlington; the universities have 22,000, 26,000 and 1,200 students respectively. Each has a distinct character. All present varied opportunities to help young people from across the country and wider world to grow in faith.

The Diocese is the location of four prisons (housing just under 3,000 men and over 300 women). There is a real opportunity to impact upon prisoners' lives and facilitate the flourishing of their faith through the activities of the chaplaincy teams. There is also an immigration removal centre within the Diocese.



Faith Museum, Bishop Auckland

The Diocese of Durham

The Diocese Today

In the recent [Diocese of Durham Statement of Needs](#) for the next Bishop of Durham, there is a description of the Durham Diocese today. It is not always a comfortable read.



Some extracts from the Statement of Needs (compiled Spring 2024)

- Durham Diocese is home to over 1,475,000 people, with 15,300 people being members of Church of England worshipping communities. The Diocese, like all dioceses, was impacted by Covid-19, however recent data suggests that our worshipping communities are not recovering at the same rate as others when compared with the national trends. This comes on the back of many years of congregational decline prior to Covid-19.
- The Diocese has 205 parishes (169 benefices) with 258 churches; of these a third have a usual Sunday attendance of less than 20. Modelling has suggested that at recent rates of congregation decline fewer than 100 churches are likely to have 20 or more gathering for Sunday worship by 2029.
- Despite considerable focus on children and young people in recent years, a survey in 2022 of our parishes identified that:
 - Only 5 churches have 5 or more teenagers regularly in Sunday worship
 - Over 60 churches have no children of any age regularly in Sunday worship
 - Over 40% of churches who responded did not provide any additional provision (weekly or monthly) for children and young people
- Yet there are pockets of excellent children and young people's work, and these are key to our future plans.
- The Diocese also has a steady flow of licensed lay vocations. We continue to look to broaden the offer by way of lay training opportunities. Interest in Licensed Lay Ministry (LLM) and Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) has remained consistent through the pandemic. Our numbers of lay ministers have been sustained in the Diocese.
- We are proactively seeking to ensure learning on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is embraced across the life of the Diocese.
- The Diocese is no different to many others in having some parishes that struggle to fill key parochial office roles and this challenge is growing.
- Durham Diocese has a modest historic endowment, glebe and reserves and is supported significantly through Lowest Income Communities Funding (LInC) to be able to sustain ministry in the most deprived areas. In 2023, £2.1million of LInC funding was received, which, supported by parish share receipts of £4.3million, made up the key components of diocesan (non-project) income.
- Financial conditions remain challenging for many parishes and the DDBF, with no overall recovery in parish share observed since the pandemic.

The description painted in the Statement of Needs reflects our thinking about how we are being called to be God's people in the Diocese over the next few years. It is into this context that our next Archdeacon of Sunderland will be called and minister with us.

The Archdeaconry of Sunderland

Sunderland Archdeaconry includes the large population centres of Gateshead and Sunderland and is largely urban with some rural edges. There are many former coal mining communities and post-industrial landscapes but also has areas of thriving industry and commerce.

The Archdeaconry covers the most northern and much of the eastern, coastal parts of the Diocese of Durham and consists of six deaneries:

- Gateshead West
- Gateshead
- Jarrow
- Wearmouth
- Chester-le-Street & Houghton
- Easington



These six deaneries contain 68 benefices, comprising 87 parishes served by 103 church buildings. Currently the Archdeaconry is served by 43 stipendiary clergy, 18 self-supporting ministers, and 48 readers. There are also 51 retired clergy and 5 clergy with PTO, many of whom actively serve to support worship in our churches. However, there is currently significant vacancy in some of our deaneries.

There has been a 25% drop off in Sunday attendance post-Covid from around 4000 to around 3000 people and, despite some pockets of relative wealth, the Archdeaconry contains large areas of deprivation, with 57 parishes allocated Lower Income Communities Funding from the national church as an element of their parish share request. However, even with this allocation of additional resource, financial challenges are prevalent, with half of parishes in the Archdeaconry contributing less parish share than the direct cost of their ministry.



Litter-pickers, Chester-le-Street



Chaplain's Parade, Ryhope

Our Transformation Journey

There is a huge need for transformation in every community of our Diocese, and sadly, many of our churches have experienced a steep decline in congregation numbers over the past decade. From 2014 to 2019 adult attendance fell by 18.9% and child attendance by 29.6%, and then Covid caused an even greater impact. Average attendance in 2023 was around 70% of the 2019 level. This reflects an even steeper decline than that experienced nationally within the Church of England.

These stark figures, along with the deep challenges of poverty and deprivation that are prevalent in many of our communities, are the context for Diocesan Transformation. Across our communities, there is not just economic poverty, but often a poverty of aspiration, connection, value and hope. We believe that these needs can be met in Christ Jesus, and our churches have an opportunity and a responsibility to share His love and the life-changing good news of the gospel with all people.



Over the past seven years, we have received Strategic Development Funding from the Church Commissioner's to develop a number of targeted mission and growth projects across the Diocese, with a range of these in Sunderland Archdeaconry.



A revitalisation of Alive Church Gateshead (formally St George's) in 2016 through a team from HTB has grown the worshipping community from 24 to more than 200. Hope Family Church (formally Oxclose Parish Church) has also grown substantially since 2018 through a revitalisation and has recently sent a team to enable this in a neighbouring deanery, supporting new growth in Christ Church New Seaham.

Alongside these, new worshipping communities have been established in various communities, each one unique to need and context. The stories of three of these are shared in these short videos:

- [House of Hope, Thornley](#)
- [Grace Church, Boldon Colliery](#)
- [Magdalene Community Church, Chopwell](#)

Within the Archdeaconry, there are a number of churches that are excellent examples of engaging with and serving their local community to meet practical and spiritual needs, but there is still a huge need for further growth and transformation.

Our Transformation Journey

Our Diocesan Transformation programme is a comprehensive, strategic vision to increase our mission, deepen in discipleship, and engage younger generations, leading to revitalisation and growth in our churches and establishing new worshipping communities. At the heart of transformation is a vision for our parishes and people to be fruitful, as Jesus calls us in John 15:

'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit... I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.'

Diocesan Transformation encompasses the breadth of fruitfulness that will be expressed throughout our diocese, across tradition and churchmanship, building on our missional heritage. We believe there is an opportunity for all parishes to engage with and take up this vision for transformation and become fruitful in their context, and we hope that our Transformation programme is impactful in every community.

Durham Diocese has been awarded funding to resource the Transformation programme from the National Church Commissioners and this will be available to enable new missional initiatives that aim to reach people not yet engaged with our churches. Where there is missional energy and a desire for growth, we hope to support and resource parishes to refine and outwork their local vision. The Archdeacon of Sunderland will be an advocate for Transformation within the Archdeaconry, supporting the development of new mission and helping to raise missional aspirations.



Our Transformation Journey

There are four strands within the Diocesan Transformation Programme.



Growing Mission aims to prepare the ground for growth through supporting and facilitating local change and development at parish and deanery level, including enabling our Vacancy Audit Programme and Interim Change Ministry.



Growing Leadership supports the discernment, formation and ongoing development of leaders, both lay and ordained, including wellbeing and pastoral supervision.



Growing Churches is focused on enabling church health and church growth through increasing evangelism and deepening missional discipleship, with an underpinning of prayer and spirituality. Key within this work is the development of new worshipping communities and supporting parish revitalisations.



Growing Younger aims to reach and disciple the emerging generations increasing engagement with 0-25s and ensuring clear mission and discipleship pathways to enable young people to encounter and follow Jesus.

These four threads of work combine to enable our vision for transformation, each one playing a role in enabling all God's people and our churches to become fruitful. The Archdeacon of Sunderland will be closely engaged with all threads of work, giving particular support to large mission projects and strategic development, alongside encouraging and supporting parishes on their transformation journey. A particular areas of focus include a missional investment for the revitalisation of Sunderland Minster, and the Archdeacon of Sunderland will support the Canon Provost and team to outwork this vision over seven years. They will also need to engage with the Growing Younger vision to develop missional chaplaincy in secondary schools and FE colleges and establish youth mission hubs in every deanery, and the Diocesan target to establish 100 new worshipping communities.

The Role

The Archdeacon of Sunderland will bring courageous and creative spiritual leadership.

The Archdeacon of Sunderland will have the task of supporting parishes and chaplaincies as they seek to develop their ministries in the context of our Diocesan Transformation programme.

The Archdeacon of Sunderland will need to be aware of the strategic evangelistic and missional dimension of archidiaconal work around clergy and lay deployment, pastoral reorganisation, and finance and buildings, so that the local church can be better equipped for mission and ministry.

The Archdeacon of Sunderland is expected to champion one of the transformation streams, chairing the relevant Programme Delivery Board for that stream.

Main Responsibilities

To play a full role in leadership of the Diocese

- Having a key, engaged and active role as part of Diocesan Transformation
- Sharing the mission, pastoral oversight and administration of the Diocese
- Chairing one of the Transformation Programme Delivery Boards
- Regular and committed attendance at a range of meetings, including:
 - Bishop's Leadership Team
 - Transformation Planning Group
 - Relevant Diocesan boards, including Bishop's Council, Diocesan Advisory Committee and Diocesan Synod
- Take the lead on supporting a sector ministry e.g. prison chaplains within the Diocese
- Represent the Diocese on local charitable trust boards where the Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (DDBF) / Diocese holds a trusteeship – to be agreed with Bishop of Durham



The Role

To carry out the legal and administrative responsibilities of an Archdeacon:

- In the Faculty Jurisdiction Measure, where the Archdeacon has jurisdiction
- Through the presentation of candidates for ordination and the induction of clergy (when asked by the Bishop)
- In the Articles of Enquiry, Inspection of Churches and annual Visitations (unless the Bishop holds their own visitations), admitting churchwardens to office and supporting them in this role
- In the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 as amended by the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Measure 2013 and the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 [and any successors to this legislation e.g. Clergy Conduct Measure] as a person with proper interest
- In the Clergy Terms of Service Measure 2009, including the role in Capability Proceedings and Grievance procedure
- Being fully committed to mutual flourishing, supportive of the Five Guiding Principles and able to live them and implement them with sensitivity and confidence
- Working with the DDBF trustees and staff, to support parishes contribute their full parish share

To work with parishes and deaneries by:

- Supporting deaneries working alongside area deans and deanery synod lay chairs
- Visiting and sharing in the life of local churches and chaplaincies
- Enabling the vacancy audit process (VAP) when parishes become vacant
- Overseeing pastoral re-organisation and configuring posts in consultation with relevant stakeholders so that missional, exciting and sustainable ministry posts and opportunities are created to support the growth of God's church – all within the context of Diocesan Transformation
- Working with PCCs to be honest and realistic about sustainability of mission and ministry in current forms in the current buildings and settings.
- Encouraging a diversity of recognised and authorised ministries.

To lead in setting a culture in which excellence in safeguarding is the norm by:

- Modelling a style of leadership that is transparent, accountable and attentive to the use and abuse of power
- Keeping their own safeguarding training up to date and being well informed about new developments in safeguarding
- Encouraging good safeguarding practice in parishes in the Archdeaconry (including the use of the safeguarding dashboard and hub) and intervening promptly where there is poor practice
- Working closely with the DSO and their team
- Chairing Core Groups as required and – if not required to chair – attending them

The Role

To take responsibility for:

- Maintaining a robust and transformative discipline of prayer, worship and the study of the Scripture
- Their own professional growth, spiritual direction, self-care, Continuing Ministerial Development and Pastoral Supervision
- Ensuring, in common with all diocesan clergy and staff:
 - That priority is given to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and that all that are vulnerable are protected to the highest standards;
 - That all health and safety instructions are followed and that care is taken to ensure safety for self and colleagues, reporting concerns immediately;
 - That all Diocesan policies and procedures are complied with

Leadership Bodies and Teams

The Archdeacon of Sunderland is a key member of a number of strategic bodies including:

- The Bishop's Leadership Team
- The Strategic Mission Delivery Board
- The Transformation Planning Group

The Archdeacon of Sunderland is a member of Bishop's Council (The Bishop's Council membership is coterminous with Durham Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee), and ex-officio member of the Diocesan Synod.

The Archdeacon of Sunderland is an attendee and key member of various regular meetings that support the diocese including: Diocesan Advisory Committee, Area Deans and Lay Chairs, Closed Churches, Housing, and HR review meetings.

The Archdeacon of Sunderland is a member of the College of Canons of Durham Cathedral.

Key Working Relationships

The Archdeacon will be accountable to the Bishop of Durham. In their day-by-day ministry they will work in close co-operation with the Bishop of Jarrow, the Archdeacon of Durham, the Archdeacon of Auckland, the Diocesan Secretary and the Head of Programme Delivery for Transformation. The Archdeacon will be supported by a PA.

The Role

Training and Support

Transition into an archidiaconal role is not always easy for parochial clergy, chaplains or sector ministers, and care must be taken to manage this change realistically. The three archdeacons in the diocese will meet regularly to discuss diocesan matters and they provide mutual support for each other. They meet regularly and frequently with the Bishops and Diocesan Secretary. They also attend meetings with archdeacons from other dioceses and attend the bi-annual Northern and National Archdeacons Conferences. Archdeacons are expected to participate in Continuing Ministerial Education and engage fully with Ministerial Development Reviews held with the Bishop of Durham. It is important that the Archdeacon is prepared to adjust and adapt, in a flexible way, as the Diocesan Transformation journey continues in the years ahead.

Attributes

Personal Attributes

- Committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Committed to the growth of God's church
- A mission-minded leader, who thinks strategically and is able and committed to encourage change and growth
- At ease with their own personal style
- Self-aware, humble and wise
- Approachable
- Able to share the hope they have within them

Experience

- Have been in holy orders for six years and in priest's orders at the time of appointment (Canon C22(1))
- A gifted communicator and preacher with both depth and breadth of theological understanding
- A proven ability to work with those of differing views
- Spiritual maturity with vision, scriptural depth, prayerfulness and a thoughtful approach to ministry
- A proven record of growing worshipping communities in number and depth
- An understanding of partnership working and how it can support communities
- Pastorally sensitive and discreet
- Proven ability to manage and implement change
- Sufficient financial literacy to engage in discussions at the diocesan board of finance and in the parishes and deaneries
- Meets the requirements of being a Charity Trustee
- IT skills - familiar with Microsoft Office and how to use it to support the role effectively

The Role

Method of Working

- Strategic and nurturing
- Accountable and transparent
- Capacity for understanding and working well with large amounts of data including complex and legal arguments
- Able to prioritise, manage their diary, and work effectively with their PA.
- Organised, with strong insight about when and how to delegate tasks
- Deploying intuition and emotional insight
- Team player who works well with a range of colleagues within and outside the church including the Chancellor, Registrar and Patrons

People Management

- Skilled and experienced pastor to clergy and lay ministers
- Able to review, appraise and to give feedback appropriately
- Skilled in managing conflict and encouraging conflict transformation and mediation
- Skilled in naming concerns and not shying away from working to resolve them
- Able to empower others with appropriate self-confidence
- An ability to be firm and fair
- Willing to work with all members of the church both lay and ordained
- Able to inspire new vocations

Other Requirements

- Knows how to live with dilemmas where there are no solutions, but which if held creatively may lead to good things
- Capacity to carry a heavy workload and maintain a healthy work /life balance
- Resilience
- Ability to travel around the Diocese



Ministry Experience Scheme National Conference



Mickey's Place, Sulgrave

Practical Arrangements

The post will be held under Common Tenure, as specified in the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009, with a stipend set in accordance with the Church of England's national scale for Archdeacons.

A resettlement grant will be paid at the current rate.

Full reasonable working expenses will be met.

Archdeacons are expected to use their own car and claim expenses.

IT/phone provision as part of the office and will include a laptop computer and smart phone linked to diocesan systems.

There is confidential PA/administrative support at the Diocesan Offices where all archdeacons have use of the facilities. This is an open plan office, well-equipped with meeting rooms and on-site parking at Cuthbert House, Stonebridge, Durham DH1 3RY.

Stipend

As at 1st April 2025, the stipend will be £44,424.

Housing

Suitable housing is provided. The Diocese is currently purchasing a property that will be within the Archdeaconry with good traveling links around the Archdeaconry and to Cuthbert House. Further details will be provided on application.

The Application Process

Eligibility and Pre-Appointment Enquiries

The nominated candidates will need to have the right to live and work in the United Kingdom.

They will need to complete an Enhanced DBS check and a pre-appointment occupational health clearance.

Safer Recruitment

Experience of your competence in managing safeguarding forms a key part of the discernment process, as well as enquiries to reassure the appointing panel that you are not a safeguarding risk.

You will be asked to complete a confidential declaration and your bishop will provide a Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL), prior to interview, having examined your blue file.

Your referees are also asked to comment on your approach to managing safeguarding.

You will also be expected to be up to date with all relevant safeguarding training. The successful candidate will be required to attend senior leadership training at the earliest opportunity (if you do not already hold it), once the appointment has been announced.

How to Apply

Applications should be made on the application form with a short (less than 2 sides) covering letter.

Applications are invited from clergy of all backgrounds and church traditions, especially those which are currently underrepresented on the senior team.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to arrange a telephone conversation with the Archdeacon of Durham, The Ven. Libby Wilkinson as part of their discernment. Please contact Kate Martin to arrange a call. Kate.Martin@durham.anglican.org 0191 374 6017

Closing date: Noon Tuesday 22nd April 2025

Applications to be emailed to jo.dowsett@durham.anglican.org

Selection event is planned for Thursday 15th May 2025 (noon onwards) and Friday 16th May 2025. Candidates will be required on both days.

Person Specification

Archdeacon of Sunderland		Criteria Assessed by		
		App	Int	Refs
Theological / Ecclesiological				
Been at least 6 years in holy orders and is in Priest's orders at the time of appointment (Canon C 22.1)	Essential	x	x	
Experience of leadership in parochial ministry or sector ministry	Essential	x	x	
Commitment to mutual flourishing and modelling the Five Guiding Principles	Essential	x	x	x
Spiritual				
Faithful in prayer	Essential	x	x	
Ability to relate to a broad spectrum of traditions	Essential	x	x	x
Evangelistic / Missional				
Experience of leading a church/ worshipping community into growth	Essential	x	x	
Experience of making disciples in a parish or chaplaincy context	Essential	x	x	
A passion for mission and evangelism	Essential	x	x	x
An appreciation of the role that church buildings can play in the mission of the Church.	Highly Desirable	x		
An effective preacher of the Gospel	Essential		x	x
The ability to see how all areas of archidiaconal ministry (including legal and administrative ones) can hold missional potential	Essential		x	

Person Specification

Leadership				
Highly developed pastoral skills	Essential	x	x	x
Ability to lead, inspire and gain trust, encouraging and inspiring others to shine and flourish	Essential		x	x
A very robust understanding of the criticality of safeguarding;	Essential		x	x
Experience of implementing safeguarding policies and procedures, responding appropriately to disclosures, taking appropriate action when compliance levels are not acceptable	Essential	x	x	x
Aware of their own power and its influence on others	Essential		x	x
Experience of resolving conflict	Essential	x	x	
Managerial and Financial				
Strong skills in chairing committees, groups and meetings; Well-honed understanding of committee procedures	Essential	x	x	
Ability to grasp nettles and not put to one side	Essential	x	x	
Gifted in journeying with others through change	Essential	x	x	
Administratively competent (IT literacy; data literate; organisationally strong)	Essential	x		
Financially literate – a good level of financial acumen; can see the relationship between finance and mission	Highly Desirable	x	x	

Person Specification

Stakeholders				
Ability to work with and alongside those with differing views - sometimes incompatibly different	Essential		x	
Able to form appropriate relations with key bodies e.g. local councils, other faith groups; key community groups.	Essential	x	x	x
Experience of entities other than C. of E. e.g. charity trustee, school governor	Highly Desirable	x		