

Diocese of Brentwood – Vicariate for Youth Ministry



Programme Leader, Walsingham House at Abbotswick

Job Description

Job Title:	Programme Leader at Walsingham House at Abbotswick
Vicariate:	Youth Ministry
Employer:	Diocese of Brentwood
Location:	Walsingham House at Abbotswick, with travel to retreat locations and BCYS events, as needed.
Responsible to:	Diocesan Director of Youth Ministry
Accountable to:	Episcopal Vicar for Youth Ministry
Salary:	£21,840 plus all meals and accommodation.
Hours:	35 hours/week, including significant evening and weekend work
Contract:	Permanent
Start date:	Summer 2024

Job Purpose

To work with the Retreat Manager to ensure the smooth and efficient running of retreats at Walsingham House at Abbotswick, as an inspiring, faith-filled retreat house welcoming over 5,000 young people each year, and as a centre of excellence where young adults are accompanied and formed in leadership within the Catholic Church, in the spirit of *Christus Vivit*.

Specific responsibilities include planning and leading retreats, and supporting with leading and training the volunteer community.

Staffing structure and support in the role

The Programme Leader will live on site and be supported by the Retreat Manager. Together, they look after the volunteer community, training and leading them in the delivery of retreats, and forming and supporting them as a young community.

The Director for Youth Ministry has an office on site, and is on hand for support and help. She is the line manager for the staff at Walsingham House. Further support is provided by the Chaplain to Walsingham House, the staff of the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service and Caritas Brentwood, and the Episcopal Vicar for Youth Ministry as well as the Vicariate Administrator. Continued Professional Development is important, and this is arranged in conjunction with the Director of Youth Ministry and Retreat Manager.

Background to the role

This vacancy has arisen following a year of re-building post-pandemic. The focus for 23/24 was to recruit a volunteer team, which has been successful, and we are now looking to recruit staff members to ensure that Walsingham House at Abbotswick can return to running retreats for the schools and parishes in the Diocese of Brentwood. The role of Programme Leader would be ideal for an experienced volunteer who is seeking to develop further in Youth Ministry.

Walsingham House at Abbotswick is a recently refurbished retreat house for young people and adults, set in the heart of Brentwood Diocese. We are in a beautiful, tranquil, rural location, five miles from Brentwood and with 14 acres of our own grounds. During school term time a team of volunteers aged 18-23 offer retreats to young people from schools and parishes within Brentwood Diocese, working with over five thousand young people (aged 10-18) every year, both at the House and across the Diocese. In the late summer and early autumn, adult groups use the house, and our staff and volunteers provide hospitality for these groups.

The Walsingham House team live on site as a community, sharing prayer, meals and social time, and exist to evangelise; to help young people encounter Christ, to understand the Gospel more deeply, and to celebrate their Catholic faith. We hope to offer a warm welcome, a place of reflection, prayer, catechesis, kindness, challenge, and above all, time to ever more deeply meet and know Christ as “brother, saviour and friend” (St John Paul II).

The Diocese of Brentwood is a lively and varied Diocese, including all of Essex, and five London Boroughs, with 19 secondary schools and a very diverse population. We work with young people from densely populated urban environments, and those who live in very rural settings, and this means there is a great variety within our retreats. Our Bishop, Rt Rev Alan Williams SM, is committed to Youth Ministry, and is very supportive of our work.

Walsingham House (formerly located at Chingford, then Canvey Island) has rich history of providing retreat opportunities for young people, and 2024 marks 40 years since the first residential retreat team began. Retreat provision is an integral part of the mission of the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service (BCYS). Walsingham House sits within the Diocese of Brentwood’s Vicariate for Youth Ministry, which also draws together work with School Chaplains, Parish Partnership Youth Co-ordinators, Parish Catechists and University Chaplains. The Vicariate also works closely with Caritas Diocese of Brentwood, with a focus on supporting social justice ministry within the Diocese.

The Vicariate enjoys an excellent relationship with agencies such as SVP, CAFOD, HCPT and the Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society and we are also closely associated with the work of CYMFed, the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation, supporting events such as Flame and other national initiatives.

If you are considering applying, you will also find more information on the BCYS website (www.bcys.net/news/vacancies/) as well as on our social media accounts. Also, we warmly welcome visitors, so please contact Claire Bailey (clairebailey@brcdt.org) if you would like to arrange to come and see Walsingham House and the work that we do in advance of applying.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions. Thank you for your interest in this role, and we look forward to meeting you.

Key tasks

Retreat Programmes

- Leading retreats at Walsingham House at Abbotswick. Retreat leadership will be in such a way as to consistently ensure the volunteer team are very well supported, and that retreat programmes are rooted in the Catholic faith, and presented in a way that is creative and engaging.
- To ensure the excellent delivery of the retreat, retreat leadership includes:
 - o Helping the Retreat Manager in contacting schools/parishes prior to retreats, to discuss their requirements/aims for the retreat.
 - o Liaison with staff and catechists.
 - o Setting and maintaining the atmosphere in which the retreat can be delivered effectively, this includes times of reflection and prayer, as well as times of lively activity.
 - o Working with school staff and parish catechists, ensuring appropriate behaviour management.
 - o Working with the Retreat Manager to ensure a safe environment for all (covering Safeguarding and Health and Safety).
 - o Evaluation of retreats, including seeking feedback from the school/parish.
- Programme development, in conjunction with the Walsingham House staff, including dialogue with and input from the volunteer team.
- Participation in weekly planning meetings with the Walsingham House management team (Retreat Manager, Diocesan Director of Youth Ministry and Chaplain to Walsingham House).

Walsingham House Community

- Supporting the Retreat Manager to ensure development of the Walsingham House volunteer team, including development through training in youth leadership at the start of the year, and ongoing training and mentoring during the year, to help their journey of faith and their witness to the young people who come on retreat.
- Supporting the Retreat Manager as they lead the Walsingham House volunteer community, and by leading by example.
- Be part of a weekly Community Day comprising of:
 - o Mass with volunteers, including those who assist in the garden
 - o A Walsingham House Management meeting
 - o A Walsingham House community meeting
 - o Formation and training
 - o Retreat preparation
 - o Assisting volunteers in the garden with certain tasks
 - o Community Night (including prayer, dinner and social)

Beyond the retreats

- Support with creating content for our social media platforms.
- Supporting the work of the BCYS through a presence at events, pilgrimages and monthly youth Masses.
- Any other duties that are reasonably requested and agreed.

Personal Skills and Qualities

SELECTION CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS		
Good level of general education (English and Maths to GCSE level or equivalent)	✓	
A recognised qualification in Theology or Youth Ministry (or the willingness to undertake such a qualification – funding is available to support further studies).		✓

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE		
Proven experience in full time parish, school or residential youth ministry in a Catholic context.	✓	
A thorough understanding of youth ministry, and the challenges faced by young people today.	✓	
Excellent presentation skills, including the ability to present to small and large groups of young people. This includes groups as small as 10-20, and as large as 200+	✓	
An understanding of what makes an effective retreat session, and the ability to creatively design and lead such sessions.	✓	
An understanding of basic Health and Safety, and Safeguarding (further training will be given to the successful candidate, since the role includes key responsibilities in these areas).	✓	
Excellent personal organisation and time management.	✓	
Prior experience of living and working in community, and/or in a residential setting.		✓
Experience of leading a team.		✓
Experience in delivering training to young adults.		✓

KNOWLEDGE		
Knowledgeable about the Catholic faith, and able to effectively communicate it to young people aged 10-18	✓	
Excellent IT skills including in the use of Microsoft Office programmes including Word, Excel and Publisher	✓	

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS/INFORMATION (e.g. hours, shift work, travel)		
A committed and practicing Catholic	✓	
Knowledge of current social media platforms and a desire to learn about creation of content for online ministry (including graphic design, filming and video editing)		✓
The ability to work evenings and weekends, on a regular basis in school term time.	✓	
A full, clean driving licence.	✓	

How to Apply

- *There is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for this role to be filled by a practising Catholic.*
- *Any appointment is subject to references and an Enhanced DBS.*
- **Application is by CV and covering letter.** *The covering letter will be used as part of the selection process and should clearly demonstrate, with examples, how your personal qualities, skills and experience match each of the requirements of the Job Description and person specification.*

- ***Please also provide the details of two referees (one of which should be a Catholic Priest). The referees will be contacted after the closing date and prior to interview, for candidates that are shortlisted.***
- ***Please send the completed application to: Claire Bailey, Walsingham House at Abbotswick, Navestock Side, Near Brentwood, Essex CM14 5SH. Applications can also be emailed to clairebailey@brcdt.org***
- ***The closing date for applications is midday Friday 14th June 2024 and we will then invite suitable applicants to interview at the end of June.***