

Diocese of Brentwood – Vicariate for Youth Ministry



Retreat Manager for Walsingham House at Abbotswick

Job Description

Job Title:	Retreat Manager for 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:	£32 - 34K depending on prior experience (<i>this is not necessarily a "live in" role, but there would be accommodation if required</i>).
Hours:	35 hours/week, including significant evening and weekend work
Contract:	2 year fixed term contract
Start date:	No later than January 2025

Job Purpose

To ensure the smooth and efficient running of 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 leading retreats, and leading and training the volunteer community. The post holder also has overall responsibility for Safeguarding and (together with the Site Manager) Health and Safety.

Staffing structure and support in the role

The Retreat Manager will be supported by the Programme Leader who will live on site. 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 Retreat Manager. 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.

Background to the role

This vacancy has arisen because in 2023 the previous Manager moved on after 5 years, to pursue a career in teaching. For the last year, Walsingham House at Abbotswick has been running on a 'hospitality only' model, while we used the time to rebuild post-pandemic. The focus has been on recruiting a volunteer team, which has been successful, and now the focus is on recruiting a Retreat Manager and Programme Leader.

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, three 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 up to five thousand young people (aged 10-18) every year. In the late summer and early autumn, adult parish groups sometimes use the house, with hospitality provided by the staff and volunteer team.

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

- Together with the Programme Leader, to design inspiring and faith-filled day retreat and residential retreat programmes, including the creation of high quality resources for young people aged 10-18, from school and parish groups.
(Note: For schools, retreat programmes are designed with attentiveness to the CSI criteria, and the requirements of the RE Curriculum Directory and the Prayer and Liturgy Directory).
- To lead retreats at Walsingham House at Abbotswick. In addition to ensuring the excellent delivery of the retreat programme this includes:
 - o Contacting schools/parishes prior to retreat, to discuss their requirements/aims for the retreat.
 - o Liaison with staff and catechists.
 - o Liaison with other people responsible for delivery of the retreats – i.e Programme Leader, kitchen staff, Site Manager etc.
 - o Responsibility for all aspects of Health and Safety and Safeguarding within the retreat, to ensure a safe environment for all.
 - o Oversee and assist in cleaning of the Main House after retreats.
 - o Evaluation of retreats, including seeking feedback from the school/parish.

Walsingham House Community

- With support from the Programme Leader, to lead the Walsingham House volunteer community by example including:
 - o Leading times of prayer
 - o Developing the professional and personal skills of the volunteer team (eg. presentation skills, communication skills, professional conduct)
 - o Meet half termly with volunteers to check-in and set goals, arrange continued professional development etc.
- Be part of a weekly Community Day comprising of:
 - o Mass with volunteers, including volunteers who assist in the garden
 - o a Walsingham House management meeting
 - o a Walsingham House community meeting
 - o Formation & training
 - o Retreat preparation
 - o Assisting volunteers in the garden with certain tasks
 - o Community Night prayer, dinner & social
- Recruiting a new volunteer team for the next academic year

Training

- Designing and running a timetable of training and teambuilding for the volunteer team. This training takes place in September, for 2-3 weeks before retreats begin, and includes retreat leadership skills, safeguarding, health & safety etc.
- Booking the necessary specialists to deliver training, as appropriate, and also delivering some training in-house, using the Vicariate staff team.
- With assistance from the Walsingham House at Abbotswick Chaplain, create an ongoing and bespoke formation programme to help the volunteers and staff of Walsingham House grow in their understanding of their faith and skills throughout the academic year.
- This ongoing programme must also include refresher training for key elements of Safeguarding and Health and Safety.

H&S & Maintenance

- Liaising with the Site Manager and other staff members to ensure the site is safe for all visitors to Walsingham House, with special attention to retreats
- Assisting the Site Manager to communicate with contractors where appropriate

Management

- Attending termly meetings of the Youth Ministry Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees
- In advance of each meeting, compiling a report regarding key deliverables
- Elements of this report are also fed back to the Diocesan Board of Trustees by the Director of Youth Ministry and the Episcopal Vicar for Youth Ministry.
- Assisting with bookings and creating a diary for the upcoming year of retreats and events alongside the Director for Youth Ministry and the Vicariate Administrator.

Hospitality events at Walsingham House at Abbotswick

- Assisting the BCYS Events & Pilgrimages Co-ordinator and the Director of Youth Ministry to organise and host additional events at Walsingham House.

Supporting events of the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service (BCYS)

- Where possible attending BCYS events including Youth Mass, Youth Gather, the Rite of Acceptance etc. – and supporting the volunteer team to attend these events.
- Serving as a Senior Leader on the BCYS Summer Lourdes pilgrimage, as part of the Diocesan pilgrimage.

Personal Skills and Qualities

A committed and practising Catholic.	Essential
Knowledgeable about the Catholic faith, and able to effectively communicate it to young people aged 10-18.	Essential
At least five years proven experience in full time parish, school or residential youth ministry.	Essential
A thorough understanding of Catholic youth ministry, and the challenges faced by young people today.	Essential
Excellent presentation and IT 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+	Essential
An understanding of what makes an effective retreat session, and the ability to creatively design and lead such sessions.	Essential
Excellent personal organisation and time management.	Essential
The ability to work evenings and weekends, on a regular basis in school term time.	Essential
A full, clean driving licence.	Essential
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).	Essential
Experience of leading a team.	Essential
A recognised qualification in Theology or Youth Ministry (or the willingness to undertake such a qualification – funding is available to support further studies).	Desirable
Prior experience of living and working in community, and/or in a residential setting.	Desirable
Experience in delivering training to young adults.	Desirable
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)	Desirable

- *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.*
- ***Prior to application***, you are welcome to visit Walsingham House; please contact Claire to arrange a time & date.
- ***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 (Director of Youth Ministry), Walsingham House at Abbotswick, Navestock Side, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5SH. Applications can also be emailed to clairebailey@brcdt.org
- ***The closing date for applications*** is midday on Friday 30th August and we will then invite suitable applicants to interview Thursday 12th September.