Taunton Baptist Church

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# Taunton Baptist Church Recruitment Policy

## 1. Purpose and commitment

Taunton Baptist Church (the church) is committed to fair, safe, transparent and consistent recruitment. We seek to appoint people who have the skills, experience and character needed for each role, while protecting the Christian identity, mission and charitable purposes of the church.

- Recruitment and selection will be inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent.
- We will comply with applicable employment, equality and safeguarding law.
- We will obtain appropriate HR, recruitment or legal advice where specialist advice is needed.
- Everyone involved in recruitment will receive appropriate guidance or training.
- We will review our recruitment practice regularly and improve it where necessary.

## 2. Deciding to recruit

The church trustees will normally approve the creation of a new post or the replacement of a leaver. Before recruitment begins, the church will define the purpose of the role and prepare a role profile and person specification setting out the duties, essential requirements, skills and experience.

## 3. Job descriptions and person specifications

Every vacancy will have a clear job description and person specification. Any requirement relating to Christian faith, church membership or theological agreement must be genuinely relevant to the particular role and identified before recruitment. Requirements will not be added simply because a candidate is known to hold or not hold a particular belief.

## 4. Advertising

Vacancies will normally be made available to existing staff and advertised through appropriate church, Baptist, educational and external recruitment channels, including the church website where appropriate. Internal candidates who meet the requirements are encouraged to apply.

Advertisements will accurately describe the role, essential criteria, any lawful occupational requirement and the church's Christian ethos. They will not contain unnecessary or misleading restrictions.

By applying for a role with the church, applicants should read the church's ethos statement alongside the job description and any person specification. Applicants are not expected to agree with every aspect of Christian doctrine in order to be treated fairly under equality law; however, where a lawful occupational requirement applies to the particular role, the church may take that requirement into account.

## 5. Equality and fair treatment

The Equality Act 2010 protects applicants from discrimination in recruitment. Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Recruitment decisions will normally be based on the candidate's ability to meet the published requirements of the role.

Applicants with disabilities will be offered reasonable adjustments so that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in the recruitment process. This may include adjustments to application methods, tests, interview arrangements or communication.

## 6. Equality Act 2010 – Religious organisation and organised religion – Exceptions

The Equality Act contains specific exceptions for religious organisations. These are not a general exemption from equality law.

Employment: where employment is genuinely for the purposes of an organised religion, Schedule 9 paragraph 2 can permit certain requirements relating to sex, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership and sexual orientation, but only where the statutory conditions are satisfied. In particular, the requirement must engage the relevant religious compliance or non-conflict principle.

Religion or belief as an occupational requirement: Schedule 9 paragraph 3 can allow an employer with a religious or belief ethos to require a person to have a particular religion or belief where that is genuinely an occupational requirement and applying it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Church activities and services: Schedule 23 paragraph 2 provides a separate, limited exception for qualifying religious or belief organisations in relation to religion or belief and sexual orientation. It can permit restrictions on membership, participation, certain services and use of premises where the statutory conditions are met.

Limits matter: these exceptions depend on the nature and purpose of the role or activity and the conditions in the Act. They do not give a church a blanket right to discriminate against applicants or members.

## 7. Christian ethos and occupational requirements

Because this is a Christian church, some roles are closely connected with Christian ministry, leadership, teaching, pastoral care, mission or the representation of the church. For such roles, the church will identify a lawful occupational requirement relating to Christian faith or other protected characteristics where the statutory conditions are met. (see TBC Ethos Statement)

For the purposes of this policy, it is a requirement that a practicing Christian agrees with the Baptist Declaration of Principle and is willing to become a church member for leadership roles and roles involving pastoral, missional or theological advice.  (Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010).

The church will not apply a Christian occupational requirement to roles simply because they are based at a church. For other staff roles, the church will seek people who are able to work respectfully within the church's Christian ethos and charitable purposes. The job description states whether this requirement applies.

Where an occupational requirement is relied upon, the recruitment panel will record the reason it applies to the particular role and the legal basis relied upon. The requirement will be applied only to the extent permitted by law.

## 8. Shortlisting and interviews

Shortlisting will be carried out against the published person specification. Interview questions will relate to the role, its competencies and any lawful occupational requirement.

At least two appropriately briefed people should normally be involved in shortlisting and interviewing. A record will be kept of the reasons for decisions and interview notes will be retained in accordance with the church's data-retention arrangements.

Candidates will be given an opportunity to ask questions about the role, the church's ethos and any expectations that apply to the post.

## 9. References and qualifications

The church will normally request at least two references from recent employers or people who have worked with the candidate. For a first job after education, an appropriate tutor or head teacher may be asked to provide a reference.

Where qualifications are essential to the role, the church may ask candidates to provide evidence of those qualifications. Any offer may be conditional on satisfactory references, qualification checks and other pre-employment checks.

## 10. Safeguarding

Where a role involves work with children, young people or adults at risk, appointments are conditional upon a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check. Safeguarding requirements will be treated as essential requirements of relevant posts.

## 11. Selection decision and offer

The appointment will be made on the basis of the evidence gathered during recruitment and the candidate's ability to meet the requirements of the role. The church will document the decision and any conditions attached to the offer.

Where a lawful Christian occupational requirement applies, the panel will confirm that the successful candidate meets that requirement before the appointment is confirmed.

## 12. Induction

All new staff will receive an appropriate induction, including information about their role, safeguarding, relevant church policies, health and safety, confidentiality and the church's Christian ethos. Staff in ministry and leadership roles will also be supported in understanding the church's theological and pastoral expectations.

## 13. Confidentiality and data

Recruitment information will be handled confidentially and only accessed by people who need it for recruitment or related governance purposes. Personal information will be retained and disposed of in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements and the church's privacy and retention arrangements.

## 14. Complaints and concerns

A candidate who believes that the recruitment process has not been conducted fairly should raise the concern with the church using the appropriate complaints or recruitment contact. The church will consider concerns promptly and objectively. Where an issue involves equality law, safeguarding or a disputed occupational requirement, the church will obtain appropriate specialist advice.

## 15. Policy review

The trustees will review this policy at least every two years, or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation, guidance, church practice or safeguarding requirements.

**Approved by:** Church Trustees

**Policy date:** August 2026

**Next review:** August 2028

## References


• Equality Act 2010, especially Schedule 9 (employment) and Schedule 23 (religious or belief organisations).

• Equality and Human Rights Commission / GOV.UK guidance on the Equality Act 2010.