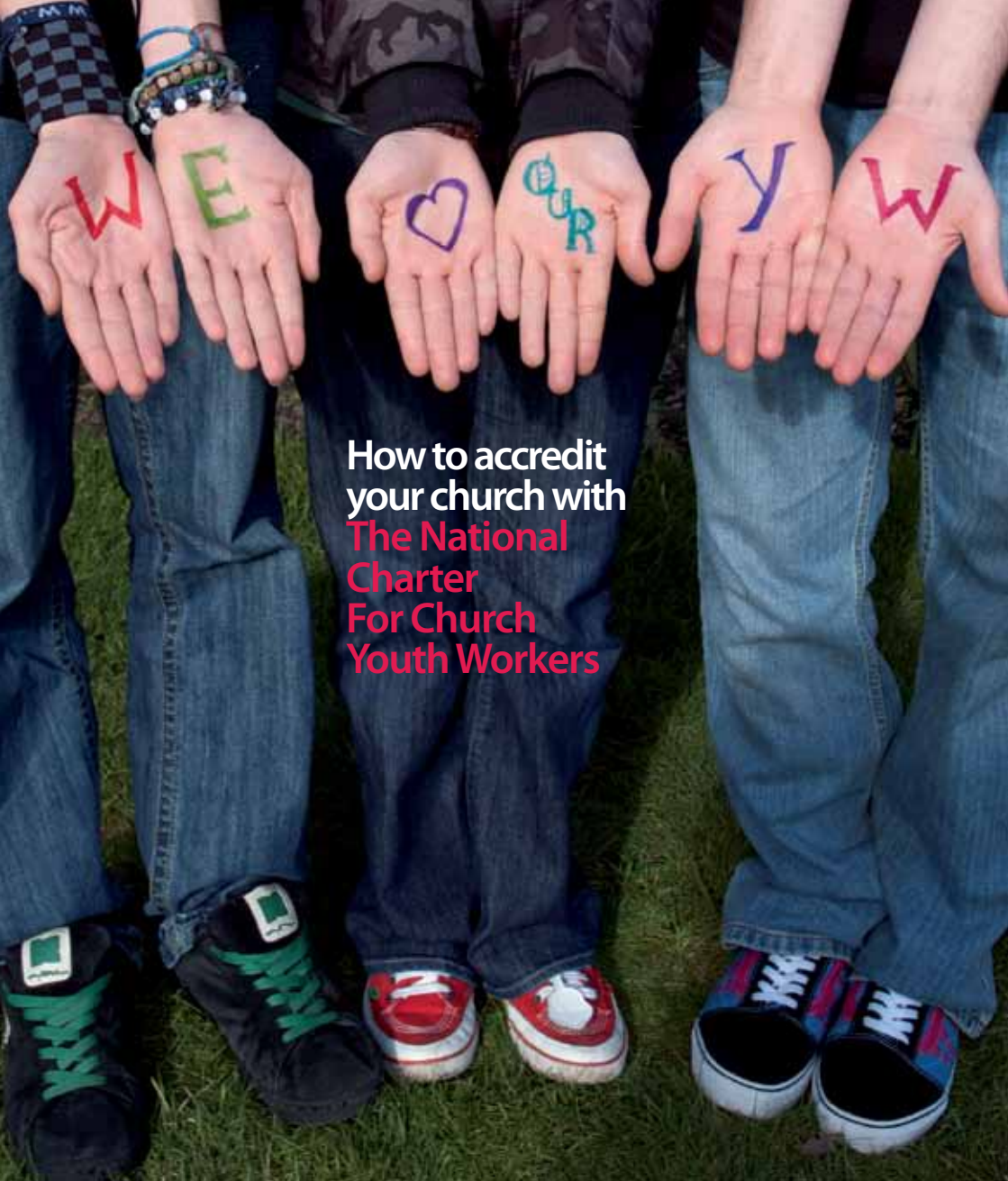




# we love our **youth worker!**

● the national charter for church youth workers



How to accredit  
your church with  
**The National  
Charter  
For Church  
Youth Workers**

▶ Published by Youthwork and Amaze



**[www.youthwork.co.uk](http://www.youthwork.co.uk)**

Youthwork is a collaboration between Oasis, Spring Harvest, Youth for Christ, ALOVE (The Salvation Army), schoolswork.co.uk, Youthwork magazine and Soul Survivor.



**[www.amaze.org.uk](http://www.amaze.org.uk)**

The Association of Christian Youth and Children's Workers.

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cheers to Dan, Paisley and Simon for use of your hands.

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[www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk](http://www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk)





**Rt Rev Kieran Conry**  
**Bishop of Arundel and Brighton**

This National Charter promises to be a valuable resource and I commend it to any church employing or thinking about employing a youth worker. It seeks to promote professional and pastoral employment practices that are rooted in prayer and inspired by our Christian values. Our young people, Church of today and tomorrow, deserve no less than the high standards and considered principles promoted by this document.



**The Rt Revd Dr John Saxbee**  
**Bishop of Lincoln**

If a little appreciation goes a long way, just imagine what a lot of it can do! Youth workers have an honoured place in the ministry and mission of our Church, but what they do for us and with us is not always acknowledged or valued. This Charter is to be commended as a real contribution towards ensuring our youth workers know that they are both supported and appreciated.



**Rev Stephen Gaukroger**  
**Clarion Trust International**

I commend this National Charter to every church who wants a fulfilled youth worker and the resulting growth in their youth work! Youth workers can easily get stuck in one of two positions. Either they are micro-managed, patronised and given the jobs no-one else wants; or left to their own devices with no clear role or job description. They both lead to frustration and limited job satisfaction! This Charter helps avoid those dangers.

# The National Charter for church youth workers



The National Charter for church youth workers is a set of seven promises churches and Christian organisations make about the practices and principles they will use in employing a youth worker.

## ◉ We will pray and support

**We believe** that our youth worker needs spiritual support in their work with young people.

**We promise** to pray for our youth worker and keep their needs a high priority in the church's prayer life.

## ◉ We will give space for retreat and reflection

**We believe** that taking time to think and pray is just as essential for our youth worker as organising events and meeting young people.

**We promise** to encourage our youth worker to use part of their schedule to give space for retreat, reflection and personal development.

## ◉ We will provide ongoing training and development

**We believe** that learning the skills of youth work is an ongoing process and that it's important to continually invest in professional development.

**We promise** to set aside time and money to provide this for our youth worker.

## ◉ We will give a full day of rest each week

**We believe** that taking regular time off helps maintain our youth worker's passion and energy for their work with young people.

**We promise** to actively encourage our youth worker to take a day away from their role each week to do something different.

### 🕒 **We will share responsibility**

**We believe** that having a youth worker does not release the rest of the church from our responsibilities towards young people.

**We promise** to encourage everyone to play a part in volunteering, praying for or supporting young people.

### 🕒 **We will strive to an excellent employer**

**We believe** that it's important to have clear structures and procedures for recruiting and employing a youth worker, and to provide supportive management structures.

**We promise** to follow good practice guidelines in the way we employ our youth worker.

### 🕒 **We will celebrate and appreciate**

**We believe** it's vital to acknowledge what our youth worker is doing and the commitment they have made to work with young people in our church.

**We promise** to make sure our youth worker knows they are appreciated and we will celebrate their achievements.

**The Charter is applicable not only to full time youth workers, but also to those with other responsibilities as well as working with young people: for example, children and youth workers, as well as to Christian organisations employing youth workers.**

This Charter helps the church articulate its desire to value and develop youth workers. It's full of good ideas overflowing from a great intention. I believe it will add richness to those who are among our church's greatest assets!

Mark Pugh, National Director, Serious4God

# Why is there a Charter?

Many churches across the UK are wrestling with the challenge of connecting with young people in our society. Fewer teenagers are linked with the church community than in previous generations, yet many of the pressures they face are greater.

One response has been to employ a paid youth worker, full or part time, to focus on some of these issues. It is estimated that there are currently around 8,000 employed youth workers in UK churches, alongside the many volunteers also working with young people. This change has brought with it a new challenge for many churches as they think about how they go about not only recruiting a youth worker, but also training and supporting them in their role.

**The Charter is meant to be a helpful way for churches to think through the key issues in employing a youth worker. It contains seven declarations churches make about these issues.**

The seven areas come from the very real experiences of youth workers up and down the country: they reflect situations where youth workers, and the churches that employ them, can often find frustration, conflict or simply unmet needs.

Some churches may find they already meet the seven areas of the Charter, others may find it beneficial in identifying areas needing change. All will almost certainly find it a helpful experience.

We believe that young people in the UK deserve to find a vibrant church, aware of their needs and able and willing to respond. **The Charter is meant to be a significant step towards helping churches make the most of the benefits of having a paid youth worker.** It is, we hope and pray, also a meaningful contribution to better serving and loving young people in the name of Christ.

## Who has developed the Charter?



**Youthwork** is a collaboration of organisations committed to working together to resource and inspire Christian youth work. Alongside Youthwork the conference, the largest annual youth work training event in the UK, they develop other training programmes and courses, publish resources and work together to better engage and equip the church to serve young people.

**Amaze** is the first ever professional body for Christian youth and children's workers in the UK, recognising the key role they play and giving them protection, support and the benefits enjoyed by other established professions. Their services also include offering support on practical issues like insurance, driving minibuses, health and safety and recruitment.

The Baptist Union's Mission Department welcomes this initiative. Sadly there is evidence that the average time a youth worker spends in a post is only 18 months. There are of course many reasons behind this but, in my experience, it is often because of lack of support and poor employment structures and practice. This turnover of workers has many consequences, not least of which is the damage to young people and the fact they feel let down, and often then leave the church and lose faith.

I believe that this Charter is timely, prophetic, and if taken seriously would change the culture and practice of employment of youth workers. It will value them as workers, the ministry that they undertake on the church's behalf and the young people with whom they are working. I commend this Charter to every church undertaking the calling of someone to work with their young people.

Ian Bunce, Head of Mission Department, Baptist Union of Great Britain



# How the Charter can benefit your church

**We want the Charter to be a real benefit to the churches as well as youth workers and, of course, young people themselves.**

▶ When a church is accredited, first and foremost it means that you are taking the responsibility of employing a youth worker seriously. It shows you have thought about some of the issues involved and are approaching them with integrity and the intention to be the best employer possible. It also says something important about the values and ethos of your church.

**But the Charter also has other benefits.** It means that you can display the Charter mark on a wide range of publicity, including job advertisements. Prospective youth workers, thinking about applying for your vacancy will know that churches who have achieved Charter accreditation will have good standards of employment and are likely to be an excellent place to work. You can expect to attract more and better candidates if you are accredited with the Charter.

It means you are able to receive discounts on the cost of other resources and services.

▶ Accredited churches can take out a discounted subscription to **Youthwork magazine**, currently just £20 instead of the normal price of £29 for the first year. The magazine provides a wide range of articles and resources for youth workers as well as information about training and other professional development opportunities.

▶ Accredited churches also receive a discount of 10% off the cost of full membership of **Amaze**, giving access to their range of benefits. You can find out more details at the end of this booklet.

We plan to add additional benefits in the future. Check out the website for the latest information.





# How to use this booklet

**This booklet contains everything you need to know to be accredited for the Charter as a church or organisation.**

This first section (pages 1 to 13) gives some background to the Charter: why it's been developed and who's backing it. The second section (pages 14-41) outlines the seven promises contained in the Charter and what churches will need to do to meet its standards. The final section (pages 42-48) contains the information you need to complete your application.

How you use the booklet is up to you, but here is one possible approach:

- ▶ Set aside time in **two** church meetings to talk about the Charter. This could be the PCC, a leaders meeting or a church member's meeting.
- ▶ The first meeting is a chance for everyone to be told about the Charter, what the seven promises include and the benefits of being accredited. Copies of this booklet can be printed out or emailed to everyone so they have a chance to read it in advance.
- ▶ Powerpoint and Keynote presentations are available for download and include the cartoons we have specially commissioned to help communicate what the Charter is all about.
- ▶ Although it's crucial to reflect on how far the church already meets the Charter, the focus of the application is on the future, not the past. The task group will need to look at what the church will do in the coming year to fulfill the Charter promises. This means listing actions the church intends to take to fulfill the seven promises.
- ▶ Before the end of the meeting, set up a **task group** of two or more people to go away and work through the Charter promises, looking at what the church is already doing and coming up with suggestions. Their brief could include:

- Exploring the questions at the end of each Charter promise in this booklet.
  - Identifying specific things the church already does to meet the promises.
  - Listing new actions to meet a promise or improve what the church does.
  - Talking in depth with the youth worker to get their opinion and input.
- ▶ It's important to include your youth worker in the process of applying to be accredited but they should not lead the process or the task group as this may make it awkward to explore some of the issues.
  - ▶ The task group should write their conclusions down so that others can read them before the second meeting.
  - ▶ The second meeting is a chance for the task group to report back and to make their recommendations. These can be discussed and agreement reached to implement them in the coming year.
  - ▶ The church can then formally agree to apply to be accredited. The job of completing the application form can then be taken on by the task group or another appointed person.

Once you have sent in your application, our assessors will look through the commitments you have made and confirm they meet the criteria. If they don't we'll get in touch and help you resolve any issues. **Accreditation is initially for one year, but then churches can quickly and easily renew in three year cycles.** If you need any advice completing the accreditation process, we'll be happy to help.

Being a youth worker is a joy and a privilege, but it can also be a lonely existence if there isn't the practical and pastoral support required. I love the simplicity and challenge of this Charter which seeks to address this. Why would any church not want to embrace these values?

Matt Summerfield, Executive Director, Urban Saints



**"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession  
and thanksgiving be made for everyone" 1 Timothy 2, 1**



# We will pray and support

- ◉ **We believe** that our youth worker needs spiritual support in their work with young people.
- ◉ **We promise** to pray for our youth worker and keep their needs a high priority in the church's prayer life.

## ◉ **What does your youth worker need to do their job well?**

Answering that question, you might make a list that includes recruiting a good number of volunteers to help, perhaps a dedicated youth room in the church and, of course, some money to spend from the church budget.

But it's important to remember that the spiritual support the church gives the youth worker is vital too; not just praying for the young people, as important as that is, but praying for the youth worker themselves.

If you take the responsibility of employing a youth worker seriously, you'll want to make sure that the church takes the challenge of praying for them seriously too.

Many youth workers will prefer you to concentrate on praying for young people rather than themselves, but the church should do both! Too many youth workers burn out or struggle with personal issues without anyone knowing what's going on. Praying for them isn't the only solution, but it's a good start.

Of course, although you'll want to pray for your youth worker publicly, perhaps in a service or at church prayer meetings, that won't always be appropriate for sharing certain issues. For more personal prayer, you may want to encourage other contexts where smaller groups or individuals can pray and support your youth worker. Some of the congregation who don't

see themselves as able to help as a volunteer with the youth work, may find this a great way to contribute.

Many churches have found it helpful to provide the opportunity for the youth worker to have a spiritual mentor: someone who'll meet with them regularly not as part of their management, but simply to offer a space to share and pray about whatever is on their mind. That gives the chance to talk openly about things without worrying about how the church will react, and can often nip problems in the bud.

A mentor could be a more experienced youth worker in another church or someone who's experienced at listening and supporting people. Whoever they are, they need to be someone the youth worker trusts and can be open to about their needs.

### ► What youth workers are saying...

"I find it embarrassing to talk about my own needs. I prefer to concentrate on the kids in the group. But I guess deep down I know I need to have people support me."

"One of the problems I had as a youth worker was finding the right person to talk to. I was struggling, really struggling, with my faith. But I felt I couldn't tell anyone in the church because they'd judge me and maybe even tell me I shouldn't be the youth worker. So I stayed quiet and tried to deal with it inside myself. In the end I just folded and left youth work altogether."

"My church have a couple of elderly members of the congregation who make it their business to pray for me. They're like my personal prayer warriors! It makes a real difference to have support like that."

We will be able to look God in the eye and say we treated our youth workers really well. That is something I passionately believe we should all aspire to.

Kenny Wilson, Lecturer in Christian Youth Work, International Christian College, Glasgow

## ● Questions to consider

- Does the church pray as much for those working with young people as for the young people themselves?
- Is there an appropriate and confidential context for the youth worker to share any struggles or needs and to ask for personal prayer?
- Even if you feel you are already praying for your youth worker, have you ever asked them if they would appreciate more prayer and support?

## ● Ideas to help you meet this promise

- Organise a spiritual mentor who is outside any management structures who can simply listen to and pray for your youth worker.
- Start a regular email prayer update for the youth work and include prayer requests from the youth worker as well as praying for young people.
- Recommission and pray for the youth worker and all those working with young people in a church service at the start of each year.

## ● What your church needs to do

- The church needs to plan to take **two** actions in the coming year related to this promise. They do not necessarily need to be the suggestions made above, and they can include things the church has already done previously and is planning to continue to do in the coming year.



"Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God." Luke 6, 12



## We will give space for retreat and reflection

- **We believe** that taking time to think and pray is just as essential for our youth worker as organising events and meeting young people.
- **We promise** to encourage our youth worker to use part of their schedule to give space for retreat, reflection and personal development.

### ◦ **What is a youth worker's job?**

It might seem basic, but how you answer that question will make all the difference in the world to how you think they should spend their time.

If the focus is running youth clubs and organising events, then you'll expect them to spend their working week doing just that.

But if you see their role as being a role model to young people, discipling and helping them grow in character and faith, then who they are will matter just as much as what they do.

The truth is that good youth workers are mentors and examples, not just organisers of things like crazy games. And that means their own faith, their walk with God, isn't incidental to their work. It's indispensable.

Every time a youth worker stops to pray, to spend time reflecting, to grow spiritually, they are doing something that not only impacts their own life, but the lives of the young people in your church too. It's often been said that the most effective way to teach a person something is if it's already real in your own life.

Of course, youth workers can struggle to do that, just like the rest of us. It's hard to put aside the urgent to deal with the important. And it's worth

remembering that many youth workers are busy running the youth programme during services, which means they may go weeks without getting any input of this kind.

That's why it's vital for churches to actively give space for their youth worker to grow spiritually. Insist on it. Tell them to find whatever they need to help them stay strong in their faith. Sponsor them to go to retreats not just youth worker training. Show them that their own spiritual journey matters to the church as much as the journey they're helping young people to take. Invest in their own journey of faith so that the young people they work alongside can be inspired by what they see.

Because the best thing your teenagers can find in a youth worker, is someone who's following God with all their heart.

### ▶ **What youth workers are saying...**

"It's taken a long time for me to realise that I need to stop and invest in myself. I nearly burned myself out before I came to that realisation."

"My church seem like they genuinely take an interest in me, and in how my husband and I are doing in our faith. It's great to know they care about us as well as the work we do with the teenagers."

"I have a shelf full of ministry books, with stuff about games and activities, that I use every week. Then there's another shelf of books about God that I never seem to have time to read. I know it's my own fault, but being a youth worker is pretty busy."

"What they forget is that every Sunday I miss the teaching... I'm outside with the kids. So how do I get to grow in my faith?"

This Charter is a clear, strategic and timely reminder that as youth workers express and demonstrate worth and value to those they serve, as the church we should be doing exactly the same for them.

Susie Mapledoram, Diocesan Youth Officer, Manchester Diocese

## ● Questions to consider

- How do you actively encourage and challenge your youth worker to take time to strengthen their own faith?
- Have you told your youth worker that you consider growing in their own spiritual life a vital part of their job?
- What money do you have in the budget to sponsor any retreats or spiritual activities?

## ● Ideas to help you meet this promise

- Give your youth worker a devotional book as a gift and a way of encouraging them to develop their own spiritual life.
- Set aside part of the budget for helping the youth worker grow in their own personal faith, as distinct from learning new youth work skills.
- Find a 'bolt hole' somewhere beautiful and arrange for your youth worker to spend some time there in retreat. Regularly!

## ● What your church needs to do

- The church needs to plan to take **two** actions in the coming year related to this promise. They do not necessarily need to be the suggestions made above, and they can include things the church has already done previously and is planning to continue to do in the coming year.

Do not neglect your gift ... Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. " 1 Timothy 4, 14-15





## **We will provide ongoing training and development**

- ◉ **We believe** that learning the skills of youth work is an ongoing process and that it's important to continually invest in professional development.
- ◉ **We promise** to set aside time and money to provide this for our youth worker.

### ◉ **Does training stop once you've got the job?**

When Paul writes to Timothy in the New Testament, he clearly places on him a responsibility to train himself, especially in 'godliness'. But Paul's advice and guidance in 1 Timothy isn't just about character and spiritual life, it's also about skills. Paul advises him on ways of managing members of the congregation, on pastoral warning signs he needs to monitor and about inter generational conflicts.

Paul believes that Timothy needs to continue to grow not only in faith, but in understanding, skills and experience. In effect Paul is behaving as an excellent employer. He is aware that Timothy is going to face challenges in his work, and so he wants to make sure he's equipped for the task ahead.

The same challenge exists for churches today who employ a youth worker. Alongside their spiritual growth, churches need to think about ongoing training and development for their worker. Whatever qualifications they arrive with, the church has a responsibility to continue to invest in them and develop their skills, just like in any profession.

After all, youth workers may face tough pastoral situations and often need to know how to counsel young people with complex needs, including dealing with child protection issues. They may need to learn new skills like

speaking in public, leading small group programmes or mentoring; and they almost certainly will need to know how to develop a strategic plan for their work. All of this requires ongoing professional training.

Add to that, the challenges of a fast-changing culture. Youth workers need to be able to understand the implications of developments in areas like technology and the internet, educational and youth policy, legislation on health and safety and so on.

There are lots of different kinds of training available to meet these needs: from one day events to conferences and academic programmes. Some are organised by the church, others by colleges, companies or the local council.

If churches want to take a youth worker's development needs seriously, the costs should be included in the annual youth work budget and the appropriate time set aside in a youth worker's schedule.

### **▶ What youth workers are saying...**

**"Someone in our church was a paramedic so they did a session on first aid for myself and the volunteers. Brilliant and cheap!"**

**"I enrolled on a cooking course at the local college and then set up a cookery programme with the young teens"**

**"An accountant from the church took me through several sessions on fundraising so I could develop the youth work programme and raise money for our trip to Poland."**

**"My church paid for me to go on a strategy training day in London. It completely changed the way I plan the youth work."**

## ● Questions to consider

- Have you built both time and money into the youth workers' schedule and the churches' budget to ensure that they can benefit from regular training?
- Have you undertaken (with the worker!) some form of training needs analysis to make certain that the training offered is appropriate to both their needs and the needs of the young people?
- Can you honestly say that you want to see your youth worker's career flourish and thrive in the future, or are you only concerned about how they perform in their work for you?

## ● Ideas to help you meet this promise

- Get hold of a training needs analysis tool (if you don't have access to one, look at [www.amaze.org.uk](http://www.amaze.org.uk) for suggestions) and work through it with your worker to identify their training needs.
- Do a simple survey of other professionals in your church (e.g. ministers, nurses, doctors, teachers etc.) to find out how much ongoing training and development they get each year and aim to provide your youth worker with about the same level.
- Approach the Local Authority and other key organisations to see what training they have to offer. You could also find out whether anyone in the church can provide training through their own work or experience.

## ● What your church needs to do

- The church needs to plan to take **two** actions in the coming year related to this promise. They do not necessarily need to be the suggestions made above, and they can include things the church has already done previously and is planning to continue to do in the coming year.

**"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing;  
so on the seventh day he rested from all his work." Genesis 2, 2**





## We will give a full day of rest each week

- ◉ **We believe** that taking regular time off helps maintain our youth worker's passion and energy for their work with young people.
- ◉ **We promise** to actively encourage our youth worker to take a day away from their role each week to do something different.

### ◉ **When is a youth worker not “on duty”?**

Of course, the answer to that is probably never: if there was a serious emergency or a special need, most of us would expect those with pastoral responsibilities in the church to respond, whatever time of day or night.

But this promise isn't about those times when we know a good youth worker will be on hand. It's about encouraging the kind of balanced life that will keep a youth worker physically and spiritually healthy. And that means taking regular time off to relax, socialise and do something else.

The truth is that some youth workers aren't good at setting these boundaries. Being a youth worker is different to many jobs in that it overlaps with other parts of your life: your church is also your employer, your friends may also be your fellow youth workers, and you are likely to live close enough to the young people you are caring for that they could knock on your door any time. Not all youth workers set clear boundaries and sometimes they need churches to encourage them to do so.

Sometimes churches, perhaps without realising, can make it hard for a youth worker to take a day off. For example, they might organise planning meetings or other events on the wrong day. Sometimes youth workers can be expected to run activities in the evening and so end up without a full

## ▶ What youth workers are saying...

"I need someone to tell me to take a day off, otherwise I just keep going. It's hard to switch off"

"It's hard to switch off when you love what you do and you care about the young people. But I know it's important that I get a break."

"Our marriage went through a lot of pressures when I used to end up doing all kinds of odd jobs on my day off. It was one of those areas that always started an argument. It nearly fell apart before I realised what I was doing to my wife. Now I make sure a day off is exactly that."

day of rest. Sometimes they will add these extra activities themselves!

That's why it's important for churches to actively encourage youth workers to develop a healthy work/life balance and make sure the youth worker knows they are expected to take regular time off. Churches will also need to think about how they can make sure that this is recognised by the rest of the church. Although there's always a huge amount to do as a youth worker, taking regular time off will help ensure the youth worker stay fresh and energised in their role: and that's something every church should want to see!

Over the last twenty years the church has done a fantastic job of recognising the need for youth workers. Now it's time the church took a serious look at their needs. I believe that this Charter can practically help them do that.

Martin Saunders, Editor, Youthwork Magazine

## ● Questions to consider

- Does the church monitor whether the youth worker takes time off regularly and would you know if they were sometimes using their day off to do work? Does the church ever plan meetings they must attend on their day off?
- Have you told your youth worker you insist on their taking regular time off and that it's important to the church that they have a balanced life? Sometimes it helps to be told this in order to really take it on board.
- Is the church, including the young people, aware of when the youth worker has a day off and that they should avoid disturbing them?

## ● Ideas to help you meet this promise

- Ask those who manage the youth worker to regularly check that they are taking a full day off each week.
- Organise another youth worker, perhaps one of the volunteers, to be 'on call' during the youth worker's day off in order to take any telephone calls or deal with emergencies.
- Use a service or small group session to explore the issue of work/life balance with all the church and encourage everyone to think about the way they structure their lifestyle. This is an issue for everyone, not just the youth worker!

## ● What your church needs to do

- The church needs to plan to take **two** actions in the coming year related to this promise. They do not necessarily need to be the suggestions made above, and they can include things the church has already done previously and is planning to continue to do in the coming year.

“What we have heard and known, what our fathers  
have told us. We will not hide them from their children;  
we will tell the next generation ” Psalm 78, 3-4





## We will share responsibility

- ◉ **We believe** that having a youth worker does not release the rest of the church from our responsibilities towards young people.
- ◉ **We promise** to encourage everyone to play a part in volunteering, praying for or supporting young people.

### ◉ **Who's responsibility is the youth work in the church?**

If the answer is 'the youth worker', you might want to think again. Appointing a youth worker doesn't relieve the church of its broader responsibility for young people: it's something shared together by everyone.

What that means is that churches should make sure appointing a youth worker doesn't mean people assume they can leave the job of youth work to a single person.

Of course, the youth worker has a specific and important role. They will probably be leading and developing the youth work and spending a lot of time with the young people. But they shouldn't feel that the church has simply handed the task over to them and left them to get on with it.

Everyone in a church should be concerned about children and young people and can find a way to contribute to supporting them and helping them grow in faith.

For some this will mean volunteering alongside the youth worker to help run the programmes, clubs and activities. Or perhaps making a more occasional commitment by helping out on weekends away and trips. But

I am convinced if every church employing a youth worker was diligently outworking this Charter, it would have a dramatic effect, not only on our youth workers but also on the young people they serve. So let's do ourselves a favour and practically love our youth workers."

Steve Clifford, General Director of the EA

it doesn't have to stop there. A healthy youth work programme needs car drivers, prayers, cooks, cleaners and those who will simply take the time to stop and talk to a young person and listen to them. Everyone has a part to play in youth work, not just the youth worker!

When we all take on responsibility for young people, it increases the capacity and effectiveness of the youth worker rather than diminishing it. Best of all, young people themselves will feel more welcome and at ease in the church. They will know that they're important not just to the youth worker but to everyone.

### ► What youth workers are saying...

"Sometimes it's just me and one other volunteer on Friday nights. It's pretty depressing."

"I wish my church would stop just telling me to find more volunteers and actually help me do something about it."

"The whole church really cares about young people. When there was trouble on the local estate, I was inundated with calls and pledges to help in any way needed. It was really powerful to realise I wasn't in this alone, but the whole church saw youth work as part of their ministry."

## ● Questions to consider

- If you listed everyone who helps with young people in some way, whether regularly or occasionally, how many of the congregation would be involved in the youth work?
- If someone started attending the church, how would they know what opportunities there are to help young people and how they should go about volunteering?
- Does the church think about the needs of young people in the community as well as the young people who are part of the church community? If so, how does the church show this?

## ● Ideas to help you meet this promise

- Organise a volunteer recruitment Sunday once a year to help the youth worker find extra helpers for the youth work.
- Challenge the congregation to each find one way of supporting young people in the church: from volunteering to praying to baking cakes for the weekend away!
- Set up a task group to explore ways that the church can get more involved in meeting the needs of young people in the community: for example, by encouraging church members to volunteer in other youth organisations and clubs or by serving as school governors.

## ● What your church needs to do

- The church needs to plan to take **two** actions in the coming year related to this promise. They do not necessarily need to be the suggestions made above, and they can include things the church has already done previously and is planning to continue to do in the coming year.

**"The worker deserves his wages." Luke 10, 7**





## We will strive to be an excellent employer

- **We believe** that it's important to have clear structures and procedures for recruiting and employing a youth worker, and to provide supportive management structures.
- **We promise** to follow good practice guidelines in the way we employ our youth worker.

### ◦ **What is the youth worker's responsibility?**

It may seem slightly odd to begin a section on being 'an excellent employer' by questioning the youth worker's responsibility, but it is important to realise that as an employer you have charged them with specific duties and responsibilities. You have a right to expect the worker to fulfil them. But this places a big responsibility on you as an employer as well.

In exactly the same way that you expect the youth worker to provide a programme of support and encouragement, and at times challenge, for the young people, he or she should expect you to provide them with the support and encouragement, and occasional challenges, that they need to fulfil their duties. Because you want the best for your young people, you expect the youth worker to be the best. But that means you also need to be the best.

You need to ensure that the way you look after the youth worker meets high standards by having a good recruitment process. This includes spending time thinking about what you want the youth worker to achieve with the young people; and making sure that they have the resources (time, money, venue, equipment, spiritual and emotional) to do this. You need to make sure that the recruitment process is fair and open and

This is a significant initiative which will be of great help to the young people and youth workers of our churches. I am pleased to commend it.

Rev Dr David Cornick, General Secretary, Churches Together in England

designed to find the best youth worker for your context. You need to have a realistic job description, and a fair and just contract. Pay a realistic wage.

You also need to ensure that you look after the youth worker once they arrive to take up their post. Churches should work to build trust and respect with the worker and create the conditions in which they can thrive, because then the work with your young people can thrive too. Good management structures and policies do lead to good youth workers. And that is good for you, and the worker, and most importantly, it's good for the young people.

### **▶ What youth workers are saying...**

**"I've been here nearly two years and I still haven't got a contract. It's got embarrassing to keep asking."**

**"Having things in writing makes me feel secure."**

**"I'd like to start a family but I'm not sure what my church will think about maternity leave. I'm the only paid worker. It's hard to talk about it and there's nothing written down. What am I supposed to do?"**

**"My church told me I was fired because I wasn't getting enough young people to the church. I never had anything written down about what would happen in a situation like that so it really threw me. I felt they were being unfair and took advantage of the fact there was nothing on paper. There didn't seem anything I could do about it."**

## ● Questions to consider

- Have you got written policies for the youth worker on key areas like child protection, health and safety and volunteer recruitment?
- Has the church got a set of terms and conditions for the youth worker role that includes, for example, procedures for sick leave, complaints and disciplinary action, expenses, maternity leave and travel.
- Do you offer training and support to the youth worker's line manager to help them do their job more effectively? Remember that the most common concern of youth workers, identified in research in 2006, was poor management.

## ● Ideas to help you meet this promise

- Review the youth worker's salary and confirm that it's a fair and comparable wage for their role, experience and qualifications. Ask an outside referee to benchmark the salary for you. Introduce a salary scale with incremental increases to acknowledge growth in skills and experience.
- Contact other local churches with youth workers and ask if you can see copies of their terms and conditions to help you see if you've covered everything needed.
- Review the youth worker's job description annually to ensure that it evolves and develops along with the role.

## ● What your church needs to do

- The church needs to plan to take **two** actions in the coming year related to this promise. They do not necessarily need to be the suggestions made above, and they can include things the church has already done previously and is planning to continue to do in the coming year.



**"Honour one another above yourselves."** Romans 12, 10



## We will celebrate and appreciate

- ◉ **We believe** it's vital to acknowledge what our youth worker is doing and the commitment they have made to work with young people in our church.
- ◉ **We promise** to make sure our youth worker knows they are appreciated and we will celebrate their achievements.

### ◉ **Do you feel valued for what you do?**

However you answer that question, you'll know how important it is. If you do, then you'll know how motivating and encouraging it feels. If you don't, you'll know how difficult and demoralising it can be. Being appreciated makes a huge difference, especially when the job is as demanding as youth work.

That means that churches should think seriously about how they value their youth worker. Sometimes it's easy to assume that people know this when, in many cases, it needs to be more explicit. "Of course, our youth worker knows how much we love them!" the church might say. But do they?

This promise is about creating a habit of acknowledging what is achieved in the church's youth work and the value of the youth worker themselves. And, of course, it applies to everyone contributing to church life, not just those involved in youth work. Celebrating and appreciating people is part of what it means to express Christ's love in our world.

Celebrating achievement, for example, could include sharing what has been done over the past few months, welcoming new members of groups, acknowledging long service and perhaps even congratulating the youth

“Every church should commit to The National Charter for Church Youth Workers. It reminds us all that we have a responsibility to care for those who are at the forefront of so much incredible work with young people here in the UK, changing lives and transforming futures.”

Steve Chalke MBE Founder, Oasis Global, Faithworks & Stop The Traffik  
UN.GIFT Special Advisor on Community Action Against Human Trafficking

workers on surviving a youth weekend intact! Whatever the reason, a climate where people are acknowledged and appreciated will almost certainly make for better and more effective youth work.

It's also vital for young people to see the youth worker being appreciated. It helps to remind them that the church considers the youth work, and by implication themselves, to be considered an important part of the church.

### ▶ **What youth workers are saying...**

“My church did a special lunch to thank me for five years of work in the church. It made me feel appreciated enough to want to do another five!”

“An older lady in the congregation wrote to me. Her own children were long grown up, but she wanted me to know how much it meant to her to see me working with the youth. It made me feel so special to know that she felt that about something I was doing.”

“My church always make a point of saying thank you to everyone in the services. You don't realise the difference it makes until you go somewhere else where they don't.”

## ● Questions to consider

- If your youth worker were to honestly answer the question 'Am I valued?', what would they say?
- How does the church already show its appreciation and celebrate the achievements of the youth worker? What, for example, have you done in the last twelve months?
- Are there particular times of the year when it's especially appropriate to celebrate and appreciate the youth worker and their achievements: for example, the beginning of the academic year?

## ● Ideas to help you meet this promise

- Hold a 'Youth Worker Sunday' when you show your appreciation to your youth workers by publicly acknowledging their work in a service and perhaps holding a special lunch or other social event afterwards. Include volunteers too!
- Ask the young people in the church to take part of a service to show how much they appreciate the youth worker. They could devise a special section of the service, report back on the impact of the youth work on their faith and life, and the difference having a youth worker makes.
- Give a small gift each year to those working and volunteering in the church, including the youth work. These small gestures can often make a huge difference in helping people feel their effort and work is appreciated.

## ● What your church needs to do

- The church needs to plan to take **two** actions in the coming year related to this promise. They do not necessarily need to be the suggestions made above, and they can include things the church has already done previously and is planning to continue to do in the coming year.

# How accreditation works

We've tried to make applying to be accredited for the Charter as straightforward as possible. We hope it will be a positive and thoughtful process for churches and also have a real benefit for youth workers.

**Initial accreditation lasts for a year, but renewal is for three year intervals.**

To be accredited you need to show that the church will take two actions for each of the promises **in the coming year**. That means the focus is on what you will do, not on what you have done in the past.

We cannot oversee how far a church carries out these actions, so there is a great deal of trust built into the system. However, when you reapply after the first year, we may ask you to show evidence of how far you have fulfilled your stated actions.

Once you are accredited, we will send you a certificate, together with electronic versions of the logo in various formats. You are free to display the logo in electronic or printed form. This includes displaying the logo on any job advertisements. You'll also receive information about how to claim any benefits from other organisations.

Together with Diocesan Youth Officer colleagues, I have rejoiced in the continuing growth in the number of youth workers employed by churches. That rejoicing is accompanied by a strong desire to see these key personnel appointed, trained, nurtured, and supported. My prayer is that the Charter will, indeed, be a great encouragement to all churches that employ a youth worker/minister to review how well they are doing, and to show in even more tangible ways that they really do value, love, and cherish the youth worker God has called to serve with them.

Peter Ball, National Youth Adviser, Church of England





# How to apply for accreditation

So you've worked through the Charter as a church and you want to apply to be accredited? Here's how.

A representative of the church needs to fill in the application form and be the main contact for communications. This can be a church leader or someone else in the congregation, but not the youth leader. Initially accreditation lasts for a year, but you can then renew every three years.

You can apply for accreditation in one of the following ways:

- online, completing the form on the web site. It's the easiest way to do it! You can save any information you enter and come back to it to complete later, before finally submitting your application.
- by hand, filling in the form at the back of the booklet and sending it to us by post. Send your completed application form to:

The National Charter for Church Youth Workers  
Amaze, PO Box 12064, Halesowen, B63 3ZN

We charge a small admin fee of £15 for each application to go towards the costs of running the Charter. If, for some reason, your application doesn't get completed or approved, we'll return the admin fee in full.

Got any questions or need some advice in completing the application process? We have a list of frequently asked questions on our website or you can email us at [support@weloveouryouthworker.org.uk](mailto:support@weloveouryouthworker.org.uk) and we'll do our best to help. Information on our data protection policy is available on our website.

We also plan to release further resources and help for churches as the Charter progresses. Check our website for the latest news, links and support at [www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk](http://www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk).



**With so many issues surrounding youth and children’s work today, it’s easy to feel like you’re stuck in a maze with no-one on hand to guide you. That’s where AMAZE comes in...**

AMAZE offers two unique Membership packages that provide vital legal protection, advice and support to churches, groups and individuals.

🔴 **individual membership**

This offers comprehensive protection and advice to full or part time youth or children’s workers whose employers are not signed up to Amaze Group membership. Benefits include:

- 🔴 Youth work best practice advice on the phone or via email
- 🔴 Representation in employment matters including Employment Tribunals
- 🔴 Free copy of the Best Practice Manual from Amaze
- 🔴 Regular newsletters keeping you up to date with youth work issues

£85 per year\* (£76.50 if you’re part of a church accredited with The Charter)

🔴 **group membership**

This package provides excellent value to churches and Christian groups employing, or considering employing, full or part-time youth or children’s workers. It also provides cover for volunteers. It allows for up to 6 full or part time youth and children’s workers or volunteers. Benefits include **all those listed above** plus:

- 🔴 Advice on employment, insurance and child protection issues
- 🔴 Employment and recruitment advice
- 🔴 Employment mediation – use our consultants to resolve any conflicts
- 🔴 Free advertising for vacancies on our website

£200 per year\* (£180 if the church is accredited with The Charter)

**For more information: call 0121 502 9649 or visit [www.amaze.org.uk](http://www.amaze.org.uk).**

\* Terms and conditions apply. Discount for first year.



# Application form to become accredited with the National Charter for Church Youth Workers

Once the church or organisation has agreed the actions it will take in the coming year, you can fill in this form on paper or online at our website. Need help or have a question? You can view answers to common questions on our website or email us at [support@weloveouryouthworker.org.uk](mailto:support@weloveouryouthworker.org.uk).

<b>Church or organisation</b>	
Denomination	
Church postcode	<i>church office or building</i>

<b>Contact person</b>	
Role in church	
Address	
Town	
Postcode	
Contact telephone	
Contact email	

<b>Youth worker</b>	<i>add others on separate sheet</i>
Full time or part time	
Contact telephone	
Contact email	
Date started in role	

**Promise 1**

We will pray and support

*Briefly outline at least **two** actions you will be taking to fulfill this promise*

**Promise 2**

We will give space for retreat and reflection

*Briefly outline at least **two** actions you will be taking to fulfill this promise*

**Promise 3**

We will provide ongoing training and development

*Briefly outline at least **two** actions you will be taking to fulfill this promise*

**Promise 4**

We will give a full day of rest each week

*Briefly outline at least **two** actions you will be taking to fulfill this promise*

**Promise 5**

We will share responsibility

*Briefly outline at least **two** actions you will be taking to fulfill this promise*

**Promise 6**

We will strive to be an excellent employer

*Briefly outline at least **two** actions you will be taking to fulfill this promise*

**Promise 7****We will celebrate and appreciate**

*Briefly outline at least **two** actions you will be taking to fulfill this promise*

We ask churches to pay a £15 administration fee to cover some of the costs of running the Charter. Please complete the details below for a credit or debit card or send a cheque payable to 'Youth Worker Charter'.

**Card number**

Name on card

Valid from

/

Valid to

/

Cardholder signature

As a church we undertake to fulfill these promises over the coming year.

**Church Leader's signature**

Church Leader's name

Youth worker's name

**Youth Worker's signature**

Date of application

Send your completed application form to: The National Charter for Church Youth Workers, Amaze, PO Box 12064, Halesowen, B63 3ZN.

[www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk](http://www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk)

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● the national charter for church youth workers