



Encounter is a scheme dedicated to equipping you to serve God for the rest of your life, no matter who you are or what you do in the future. It's primarily for 18-25 year olds who are seeking somewhere to serve, learn, grow, be challenged and experience the local church.

There's no pressure to fill places – it's about the right people, called by God at the right time, to take part in something unique.

Aims

The scheme is about growth in discipleship, personal development and discovering a sense of vocation. It centres on:

- equipping for a life of service to God
- encountering experiences of the varied areas of church life
- encouraging deeper Biblical understanding
- enabling discovery about who you are and the gifts God has given you
- empowering you in the use of these gifts for the benefit of His Church

Ethos

The underlying ethos is an expectation that the power of God can transform lives. You will:

- work with others to explore your God-given gifts and abilities
- experience times of joy and excitement as well as challenge
- be provided with support throughout

What's it about?

- *Enriching* yourself and your Faith by seeing God in action
- *Exploring* new understandings of parish based ministry
- *Experiencing* the Church at home and overseas.

What is involved?

Duration

The scheme year runs from middle of September to the first week of the following August.

Church placement and experience



Through the year you are placed in a local church, becoming a key member of this worshipping community. You are given opportunities to learn and lead in many areas of local church and Diocesan life. You will have a highly visible presence within the church and the Diocese.

Depending on availability, and your interest, it may be possible to offer a short taster in specific areas of Christian ministry, such as with RAF or hospital chaplaincy, Mission to Seafarers or other organisations. You are given regular preparation time, briefings and debriefing on activities. You are trained and supported to provide a pre-planned event within the life of your placement parish.

World Church experience

During the year you are offered a chance to spend two or three weeks abroad, working alongside Christians overseas. This is usually in either Africa or India. We partner with a number of Christian organisation with expertise in this field.



Here are what some previous Volunteers have said about the scheme....



'An unbelievable year, which I believe will hold me in good stead for years to come!'



'During my YES placement I both learned and taught loads. It gave me opportunities to try exciting new things. I would recommend it to anyone.'



'It's so great to be able to serve God for a year, doing so many different things for Him and for others.'

... it is possible to put anyone interested in doing the scheme in contact with past members to find out from first hand what it was like.

The Training

Training is flexible, to reflect the interests and needs of the Volunteers. Unlike some schemes, Encounter looks at the group coming through and adapts the training to particular requirements.

Some of the areas explored may include: psychology, life awareness skills, aspects of being God's Church, fundraising, theology, Biblical study, budget setting, project management, personal discipleship, team building, developing youth activities and working with children. The core taster modules are listed at the back of the booklet.



Training locations



Training is undertaken at Diocesan Church House, in Hove, and at St Bartz, in Barcombe.

St Bartz is a beautiful converted church with excellent training facilities. It accommodates up to 24 people and has kitchens, shower rooms, a lounge, prayer room, bbq and table football.

Those giving training include people with experience of church ministry, expertise in their area of work, interest in seeing excellence in youth ministry and those with a passion for the formation of younger Christian leaders.

What is provided?

The parish

The scheme is not paid employment for work done, but a unique opportunity for training and discipleship through a church placement. Your living costs and accommodation are provided for you, including monthly pocket money.

The Parish provides:

- a role description for the Volunteer (in collaboration with the Encounter Manager)
- a Spiritual Mentor
- a Line Manager who meets regularly (usually weekly) with the Volunteer, for approximately one hour, with a prior agenda for each meeting
- a two-week induction at the start of the placement and a weekly timetable of parish involvement, agreed with the Volunteer
- a specific project for the Volunteer to develop throughout the year
- support for the Volunteer when undertaking Diocesan activities and training
- regular time off: a day a week free of *any* commitments (and one 'light duty' day); time off during the year (plus Bank Holidays) and release from parish duties in time for the Easter and Christmas festivals

The Diocese and beyond

The scheme is run by the Diocese of Chichester with the support of the Ministry Division of the Church of England, and, with discretion, is open to candidates from other Diocese's of the Church of England. There are over 500 churches in Chichester Diocese including urban, suburban, rural, large, smaller... giving a range of placement possibilities.



The Diocese provides:

- Ongoing support with regular contact with the Encounter Manager
- Residential and day conferences with a range of speakers and activities
- Access to short courses e.g. a first aid qualification
- The Overseas Placement, for those who would like this experience
- Taster Placements in specific areas of Christian ministry, for those who would like this experience

Support Structures and Supervision

Support is provided in a number of ways:

- the Encounter Manager (external to the parish)
- the Diocesan “YES team” of advisors/officers (external to the parish)
- the Line Manager
- the Mentor
- Orientation briefings for the Overseas Placement

Scope of activity in the placement



The possibilities in terms of scope of work are broad and are limited only by the vision of those involved. There are three levels of specialisation:

General parish life: Taking a servant role in Sunday and midweek activities, shadowing the clergy, visiting people at home or in hospital, leading a Bible study, observing festivals.

A specific project: This involves experience in one area of parish ministry, taking this aspect as a placement focus. It may be an aspect of parish life the Volunteer has no experience of, but is interested in, and in which the parish can offer an opportunity for the Volunteer to gain skills. It could be an area the parish seeks to develop themselves and they see that the Volunteer has a gift for this.

Examples of projects include: developing a youth group Bible study from scratch...starting a multi-denominational town-wide youth service...visiting elderly residents...learning to lead a small group...understanding the work of the parish office...developing skills in leading music and worship

Experience of leadership in the life of the Diocese and beyond: This includes options to take part in the Chichester Diocesan residential May and Summer youth worship festivals, work as part of the Spring Harvest youth team, taking part in the national youth pilgrimage to Walsingham and possible involvement in Soul Survivor. These depend on your interests and on availability.

Accommodation



Your accommodation is provided free of charge. We attempt to provide you somewhere that you will feel is 'home from home'. We recognize that you will need a place where you can relax, be yourself and re-create and a base from which you can work.

We would be looking for a family home with a family atmosphere which can offer an individual bed-sit room with, for example, a desk and comfortable chair. It would be a home where shared meal times are considered to be important and encouraged, in which confidentiality is respected on both sides. The hosts will offer support and care emotionally and spiritually. We would expect you to have reasonable access to the telephone for incoming calls and your own keys to the property.

Arrangements for financial contributions



In the *past* Volunteers paid £1,500 for training/accommodation and paid a further £1,500 to cover the cost of the overseas element. As you will see, this cost has been substantially reduced!

The current position is that the placement parish and Diocese asks that you contribute a single amount of £700 (which you must pay in full before the placement can begin). PCCs and your parishes are usually very willing to help towards this. Allowances could be made for cases where this contribution is a particular hardship, though this would need to be considered early in the discernment process.

There are no other costs to be borne: the host parish/Diocese pay for all of the rest. On placement you will receive around £110 (regularly under review) per calendar month as pocket money, and a small Christmas bonus. You will have free access to training, have no living costs to account for, will be reimbursed for your expenses and there will be no cost for the Overseas Experience (alone worth well over £1,500).



Do the maths! It has been estimated that the overall cost per member would be around £8,000 in terms of housing, food, training, travel, residential activities, support, pocket money and other costs.

Could this be for you? What we're looking for in a Volunteer

We'd hope to see some evidence of these traits in a Volunteer for the scheme, or for Volunteers who are seeking to develop them through the scheme year *:



- a desire to seek where God is calling you in life and to play your part in the life of the Church
- a desire to develop a discipline of regular prayer and Bible study and to be, in the opinion of friends and others, 'growing in stature and wisdom'
- increasing self-awareness and stability of character
- an interest in personal development readiness to embrace change
- a desire to seek personal integrity in all aspect of life: emotional, psychological, sexual and financial
- an ability to work well in a team and with those in authority
- a desire to deepen your understanding of the Christian faith, to put it into practise, and to share it with others

(* Volunteers considering ordination at some stage could use these as aims to achieve, or the focus of their placement, as they form the basis of the 'Criterion for selection for ministry in the Church of England')

Core taster modules and areas explored

Professional Conduct and Care	Leadership	Discipleship development	Theology
Free access to First Aid and food safety and handling courses	Small things matter to God: Developing and leading teams and small groups	Residential group retreats and training including a focus on: Joys, sorrows, hopes and fears	What is Church Growth?
What is a professional? Professional conduct, a week in a parish behind scenes, living in the public eye	Developing leadership and being a learning leader	Listening, wholeness: theology of the person	The Church: A brief history. What is the Anglican Church? What is a Diocese?
Looking after yourself: personal safety and care	Taking the initiative: how to change things	Working with children: theology of the child. Working with teenagers: youth groups and cultural awareness	The Cross: what was happening?
Child protection and parish based discussion with child protection rep	Your personal life long mission statement is? Developing vision and mission for yourself, others and a church	Free access to Diocesan 'YES Equip' training and lunches with well respected visiting speakers	Looking at the Old and New Testaments: what do they say and why?
Developing projects: planning, resources, management and strategy	Voice projection and Communicating the Gospel: speaking in public	International Christianity, social care and world church (residential 2+ weeks in a 2/3 ^{rds} world church context) and residential orientation training	The Gospel of Mark and The Kingdom of God
God and the Sovereignty of time: time and diary management	Leading aspects of the two Diocesan residential camps	Making time for God: personal devotions, Bible study and discipleship to last the year	Sovereignty of God: Biblical and Tradition, perspectives on Missio Dei
Money? Budget setting and care of God's resources	You're standing at the bus stop and someone says 'so, what is this Jesus thing? You reply...?	Personally speaking: naturally sharing your faith, with training by Through Faith Missions	What does God's Word mean? Interpreting The Bible

What to do next, and when?



If you're interested in the encounter scheme we'd recommend you **get in touch as soon as possible**.

The sooner we have an indication that you may be interested, the earlier we can begin exploring the right placement church for you. We pride ourselves on taking particular care over this process and it is something we never rush.

How early is too early? There are usually several fifteen year olds on the 'interested list'.

If you would like to know more, please visit: www.yesonthenet.org.uk/encounter/ where you can watch the Encounter videos, read more on the scheme and download an application form.

To speak to someone in the team: please call the "YES team" in the Diocese of Chichester on our direct line: **01273 425684**. The YES team are the youth department of the Diocese.

You can email: simon.taylor@diochi.org.uk

To write: **Revd Simon Taylor, The Encounter Manager, Diocesan Church House, 211 New Church Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 4ED.**



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

To find out more about the scheme and its work with Ministry Division of the Church of England please visit:

www.callwaiting.org.uk/

This is an excellent site for information on vocation and discipleship. It also contains contact details for the Revd Jules Cave Berquist, the National Vocations Officer.