



**Wakefield
Cathedral**
Christ. Culture. Community.

Choir Chaperone

Application Pack



Role Description

Choir Chaperone

Thank you for your interest in the post of Choir Chaperone at Wakefield Cathedral. This appointment is key to the mission and outreach of the cathedral. As Dean, I am absolutely resolute in my belief that the Church of England's choral tradition provides a firm bedrock for successful and sustainable mission and outreach, and I am immensely fortunate to have stepped into such a wonderful inheritance at Wakefield when I was appointed in 2018. Be assured that the successful candidate will be joining a team of people who are fully committed to the flourishing of the cathedral's ministry at the heart of our city and across the wider Diocese of Leeds. For more details on our plan, I would draw to your attention the cathedral's strategic vision document *Firm in Hope*.

The Very Revd Simon Cowling

Dean of Wakefield

About Wakefield Cathedral

The Saxon cross that stands at the west end of the Cathedral precinct (the original of which is in the Wakefield City Museum) bears witness to the fact that God has been worshipped at the heart of Wakefield for well over a thousand years; the earliest part of the present building dates from the middle of the twelfth century. When the Diocese of Wakefield was created in 1888 the Parish Church of All Saints became the Cathedral Church for the new diocese and Wakefield was elevated to city status. (Following the establishment of the West Riding County Council in 1889 Wakefield became the county town. The city benefits from some distinguished civic architecture as a result.)

Wakefield Cathedral, with our sister cathedrals at Bradford and Ripon, is now one of the three mother churches for the Diocese of Leeds which came into being on Easter Day 2014. All three cathedrals, co-equal in status, serve the mission of the Bishop and of the diocese as a whole, working closely and collegially. All three Deans are members of the Bishop's Senior Staff Team and of Diocesan Synod and each cathedral has its own honorary canons who are all members of the College of Canons of the whole diocese. Because of the contrasting but complementary nature of our contexts we are able to respond to the remarkable diversity of this young and flourishing diocese in a way that allows cathedral ministry to be owned and valued by parishes in urban, suburban, estate, rural and market town settings. Our spread of geographical location has also enabled the three cathedrals to play a major part in enabling and sustaining the momentum and enthusiasm for mission that has characterised the Diocese of Leeds since its creation ten years ago.

The current Dean of Wakefield, the Very Revd Simon Cowling, took up his post at Michaelmas 2018. The Sub-Dean and Canon Missioner, the Revd Canon Dr Philip Hobday has been in post since September 2022, and the Canon Precentor, the Revd Canon Dr Kathryn Goldsmith, joined in January 2024.

The Liturgical Tradition

The cathedral's pattern of worship has been established over many years, and Wakefield is known for its strong catholic tradition. Within that tradition the pattern has gradually evolved and today embraces a wide range of authorised services. The Book of Common Prayer is used for Evensong on weekdays (with the BCP psalms for the day) and on Sundays. On Sundays Common Worship, Order One (contemporary language) is used for the 09.15 Eucharist (the 'Parish Mass', in effect), with a congregational setting led by one of the treble lines. At the 11.00 Eucharist Common Worship, Order

One (traditional language) is used, with a mass setting sung by the full choir. Incense is used at both Eucharists on Sunday morning, at Festival Eucharists and Solemn Evensongs.

Great importance is attached to the careful execution of the liturgy and we are fortunate in our team of dedicated servers, who, with our musicians, make a vital contribution to the effectiveness of the services particularly at the Festivals and during Holy Week, and, indeed the whole year round.

The Music Department

Wakefield Cathedral Choir has been a central part of the worship and mission of Wakefield Cathedral ever since its elevation to cathedral status in 1888, following on from the already established parish choir. Since its foundation, the choir has always included boy choristers alongside adult lay clerks, and in 1992 Wakefield became only the second English cathedral to introduced girl choristers. Initially the boys and girls sang separately, but in more recent years they have joined forces more frequently, and in September 2023 the two groups were formally merged to create a single treble line. In general, there are up to around 20 choristers, who sing either by themselves or with the adult lay clerks.

Alongside this choir is Byrd Song, a choir for younger children, and the Cathedral Youth Choir for older teenagers. Both these groups sing services at least once a fortnight and provide opportunities for children and young people to be involved with the cathedral choir from the age of six to eighteen. There are also a number of adult sopranos who sing with the lay clerks on a regular basis as the Cathedral Consort, and a Cathedral Voluntary Choir. In total, the choirs sing at least six services each week – Choral Evensong on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday, and two Eucharists each Sunday morning.

In addition to this, the cathedral choir has a vibrant concert programme, including two sell-out performances of Carols by Candlelight each December. The choir has also undertaken numerous choir tours over the years, both within the UK and abroad, with past locations including Poland, Sweden and the USA, and a recent tour to Norwich in October 2024. The choir has frequently sung on radio and television broadcasts, and has made a number of CD recordings. We are hoping to secure a BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong broadcast in the not-too-distant future.

The organ is one of very few five-manual instruments in the UK, and dates primarily from 1905 (reusing a small amount of previous pipework), with significant rebuilds in 1951 and 1985. There is also a three-rank continuo chamber organ used for early repertoire, and a two-manual electronic practice instrument located in the chapter house. The cathedral is also fortunate to have use of a Steinway Model C grand piano.

For the entire period from 1888 to 2010 there were only four Directors of Music, and the current Director, James Bowstead, is only the seventh person to hold this position, supported by Alana Brook as Assistant Director of Music and Grace Middleton, the current Organ Scholar. The music department operates under the supervision of the Canon Precentor, the Revd Canon Dr Kathryn Goldsmith.

Weekly Timetable

The weekly timetable of duties for the choir chaperone is as follows:

Monday (DoM's rest day)

16.00	Supervise arrival
16.30	Youth choir rehearsal
18.00	Finish

Tuesday

11.00 Music department meeting (*Chaperone may occasionally be asked to attend*)

Week A		Week B	
15.30	School collection	15.30	School collection
16.15	Byrd Song rehearsal	16.15	Byrd Song rehearsal
17.00	Youth choir rehearsal (Byrd Song finish)	16.45	Byrd Song tea
17.30	Youth choir Evensong	17.30	Byrd Song Evensong
18.00	Supervise collection	18.00	Supervise collection
18.15	Finish	18.15	Finish

Wednesday

15.30	School collection
16.30	Chorister rehearsal
17.30	Evensong (Juniors in Week A; Seniors in Week B)
18.00	Supervise collection
18.15	Finish

Thursday

Week A		Week B	
15.30	School collection	15.30	School collection
16.30	Chorister rehearsal	16.30	Chorister rehearsal
17.30	Chorister tea	18.00	Supervise collection
18.00	Full rehearsal	18.15	Finish
18.30	Evensong sung by choristers and lay clerks	<i>(Evensong in Week B is sung by the cathedral consort)</i>	
19.15	Supervise collection		
19.30	Finish		

Friday (ADoM's rest day) (*only required once or twice a term by arrangement*)

15.30	School collection
16.30	Chorister rehearsal
18.00	Supervise collection
18.15	Finish

Saturday

No regular duties, but occasional extra concerts, festivals or rehearsals

Sunday (*Week B only*)

08.30	Supervise arrival
08.45	Rehearsal
09.15	Eucharist sung by choristers
10.30	Rehearsal
11.00	Eucharist sung by choristers and lay clerks
12.15	Supervise collection
12.30	Finish
14.30	Supervise arrival
14.45	Chorister rehearsal
15.00	Full rehearsal
15.30	Evensong sung by choristers and lay clerks or Consort
16.15	Supervise collection
16.30	Finish

N.B. *Additionally, the Youth Choir sings Sunday services (usually morning) about twice a term, often in Week A, which the chaperone will be expected to attend.*

There will be some variations from this schedule and additional duties, which will be notified to the postholder well in advance.

Purpose of post

This role supports the Director and Assistant Director of Music in ensuring the cathedral's duty of care towards the children and young people in the cathedral choirs. They will be a pastoral point of contact for those children while they are at the cathedral and support their development and progress in the choir.

Accountability

The Choir Chaperone will be line-managed by the Director of Music and accountable to the Canon Precentor in respect of their duties within the department. The postholder is accountable to the Dean for all matters relating to the terms and conditions of appointment. Leave is taken in agreement with the Director of Music.

Principal Duties

- Promoting a choir culture in which each individual is valued, and everyone works towards the same high standards.
- Building meaningful relationships with the children and young people in the choir and with their parents/carers.
- Attending all regular rehearsals and services involving children or young people, as outlined in the weekly timetable.
- Attending additional rehearsals, services and events involving children or young people, as outlined in the termly choir schedules, and as agreed in advance with the Director of Music.
- Attending additional planning meetings or music department meetings by prior agreement with the Director of Music.
- Being the first port of call for any medical or other issues which may arise during rehearsals and services.
- Providing first aid if needed (appropriate training will be provided).
- Being the first point of contact for pastoral care of children and young people in the choir during rehearsals and services.
- If necessary, contacting parents/guardians using the department mobile phone, for example if a child is ill and needs to be collected, or if a child has not arrived unexpectedly.
- Assisting with collection of choristers from school on days when it is required – this will involve walking to and from the relevant school or schools with another member of staff.
- Helping to supervise choir teas on alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- In consultation with the Assistant Director of Music, preparing choir teas if required (this is often done by choir parents).
- Supervising children and young people between arriving at the cathedral and the start of the rehearsal.
- Supervising collection of children and young people – ensuring that only those with express permission leave by themselves, and that all others have been collected by a parent or guardian, and contacting parents/guardians if necessary.
- Supervising and assisting if necessary with robing and disrobing before and after services.
- Filling out the choir register at each rehearsal or service, making a note of any reason given for absences or lateness.
- Recording incidents as required in the first aid/incident log.
- Ensuring the provision of water and biscuits between the two Sunday morning services (biscuits will be provided).
- Overseeing the provision, cleaning, maintenance and repair of the choir robes, including keeping a record of which robes are in use, regularly reviewing the provision depending on growth of individuals.
- Any other duties as may be reasonably requested by the Director of Music.

Work Outside the Cathedral

Chapter recognises that, given the part-time nature of this role, the post-holder is likely to be undertaking other work alongside their duties at the cathedral. The choir chaperone will be expected to attend all the regular weekly duties as outlined above, and to prioritise them over other commitments if necessary. During the choir term, where outside engagements involve a clash with those duties they may only be undertaken with the explicit prior approval of the Director of Music. Any additional duties outside the regular timetable will be notified in advance and discussed with the post-holder.

Training and Development

The post-holder will be encouraged to develop their skills and undertake training where relevant. In particular, the cathedral will ensure that they are provided with relevant first aid training.

Safeguarding

Wakefield Cathedral takes its responsibility for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults very seriously and their welfare is paramount in all areas of cathedral life. Details of our safeguarding policies and practices [can be found here](#). All clergy, lay staff, and volunteers are properly recruited, screened, trained, and supported. Because this role involves regulated activity with children and young people, appointment will be subject to a satisfactory Confidential Declaration; Enhanced Disclosure with Barring checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service; and three satisfactory references. The post-holder will need to complete all necessary Church of England safeguarding training and to provide satisfactory proof of the candidate's right to work in the United Kingdom.

How to apply

To apply, please fill out the attached application form, including the details of three referees, one of whom should be either your current or most recent employer. This form should be returned to James Bowstead, Director of Music by Wednesday 09 July 2025, ideally by email: DoM@wakefield-cathedral.org.uk.

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact James Bowstead, Director of Music, either by email as above or by phone (01924 373 923).

Interview Process

The interview process will take place between Wednesday 23 July and Friday 25 July. The panel will include members of cathedral staff and a representative of chapter.

Person Specification

Essential

- A commitment to the development plans of Wakefield Cathedral as set out in the strategic vision.
- Excellent standard of written English, and ability to adapt spoken English to suit the audience.
- Sympathy with the values and ethos of the Church of England and the Cathedral, willing to support the role of music and musicians in the cathedral's mission and opportunities for children and young people to explore Christian faith.
- A commitment to helping create a safer workplace and culture, including undertaking all necessary safeguarding training, following all safeguarding policies/procedures, and modelling good safeguarding practice in their own conduct.
- A good communicator who can inspire and support children and young people.
- A team player, able to encourage collaboration without enforcing undue conformity.
- A willingness to work in locations other than the cathedral site.
- A maturity of character and a good sense of humour.
- An ability to stay calm under pressure.
- A willingness to receive criticism and adapt.
- A keen awareness of context, and ability to regulate behaviour and manner accordingly.
- An efficient and reliable administrator.
- Good general IT skills, including a working knowledge of MS Office and use of a Smartphone.
- Commitment to the full inclusion of all, with special regard to age, ability, gender identity, sexuality, religion, economic status, social class, and ethnicity.

Desirable

- Teaching, counselling or social work qualification.
- Experience of cathedral life and how the choir functions in a cathedral context.
- Experience of using ChurchSuite or another data management system.