



Director of Music

RECRUITMENT PACK

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN OF BRISTOL

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Music (Master of the Choristers) at Bristol Cathedral.

This is a pivotal moment in the life of Bristol Cathedral. We are seeking an outstanding musician, leader and educator to build on our strong musical foundations and help shape the next chapter of our worship, mission and public ministry.

Music lies at the heart of the Cathedral's life. It enriches our worship, inspires our community, nurtures young people in confidence and excellence, and helps people encounter God. This role offers a rare opportunity to combine artistic leadership, liturgical creativity, pastoral care and educational outreach in one of the country's most vibrant and diverse cities.

We are proud of our Anglican choral tradition, our thriving choir and chorister programme, and our long-standing partnership with Bristol Cathedral Choir School, one of only a handful of state choir schools in the country. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that the musical life of the Cathedral reflects the diversity, creativity and cultures of contemporary Bristol. We are looking for someone who can hold these aspirations together with confidence, imagination and generosity, building new partnerships and creating opportunities for wider participation in music and worship.

Earlier this year, an independent review of Music and Liturgy affirmed the strength of our musical provision while identifying exciting opportunities for growth, engagement and mission. Its recommendations have helped shape both this role and our vision for the future.

We are fortunate to benefit from strong chorister recruitment, a flourishing relationship with Bristol Cathedral Choir School, and a magnificent recently restored organ. Together, these provide an excellent platform from which to develop the Cathedral's musical life for the years ahead.

If you are excited by the prospect of leading music in a Cathedral that values both tradition and innovation, and if you share our commitment to excellence, inclusion and mission, we would love to hear from you.

If, having read this pack, you feel called to apply, we will be delighted to receive your application

Mandy

The Very Revd Dr Mandy Ford
Dean of Bristol





OUR VISION AND VALUES

Since 2020, Bristol Cathedral has pursued a vision of becoming ever more fully Bristol's Cathedral: widening participation and building a greater sense of ownership, trust and belonging across the city and Diocese.

Following extensive consultation across the Cathedral and Diocese in 2021, this vision was expressed in the phrase "Here With You". We aspire to be a place of welcome, worship and sanctuary for all; a Cathedral that is rooted in prayer, engaged with the life of the city, and open to everyone.

Together with the Diocese of Bristol, we share a common purpose:

- ✦
- ✦ Follow Jesus
- ✦ Welcome Others
- ✦ Transform Communities

As the seat of the Bishop and the mother church of the Diocese, we seek to live out this purpose through worship, education, community engagement and service.

Our life together is shaped by four core values:

- ✦
- ✦ Bravery
- ✦ Creativity
- ✦ Openness
- ✦ Generosity

These values underpin our work to make the Cathedral more accessible, deepen our engagement with the communities we serve, and address the legacy of slavery and the ongoing reality of racism and exclusion. Significant accessibility improvements are currently underway, including new level access routes and the installation of a lift connecting key visitor facilities.

We believe that music and worship play a vital role in bringing this vision to life. We are proud of our Anglican choral tradition and committed to its future. At the same time, we seek to ensure that the musical life of the Cathedral reflects the diversity, creativity and cultures of contemporary Bristol, creating opportunities for wider participation and deeper engagement with communities across the city and Diocese.

ABOUT BRISTOL CATHEDRAL

Bristol Cathedral stands at the civic heart of one of the UK's most vibrant and creative cities. Set on College Green, we are surrounded by the cultural, civic and community life of Bristol, a diverse city known for its creativity, rich musical heritage and strong sense of identity. From festivals and major civic occasions to daily worship and quiet reflection, the Cathedral plays an active role in the life of the city.

The Diocese of Bristol stretches across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Wiltshire and Swindon, encompassing cities, towns, villages, coastland and farmland. More than 200 churches and 72 church schools serve this varied region. As the seat of the Bishop and the mother church of the Diocese, we welcome thousands of children and young people each year through education programmes, school visits, diocesan services and family events.

Founded as an Augustinian Abbey in the 12th century and raised to cathedral status by Henry VIII, Bristol Cathedral combines a remarkable heritage with a forward-looking vision. Alongside caring for our historic buildings and traditions, we are committed to accessibility, inclusion, racial justice and environmental responsibility. We continue to engage thoughtfully with the legacy of slavery and our place within Bristol's history through education, conversation, the arts and public engagement.

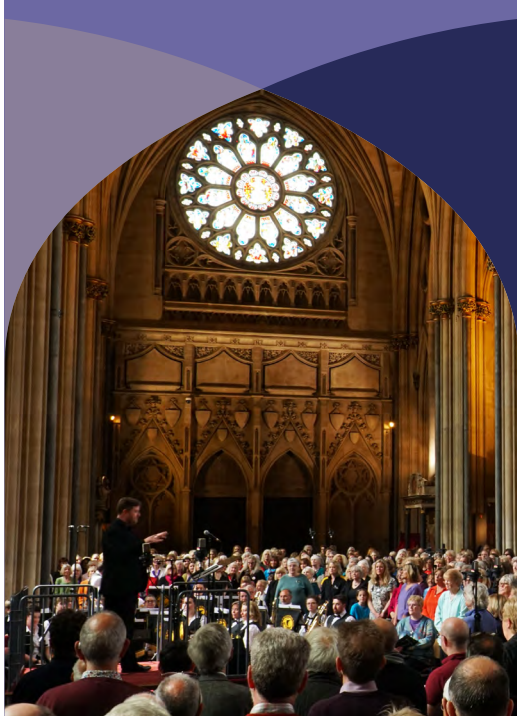
Our congregation includes long-standing members, former choristers and choir parents, families, students and newcomers drawn by the quality of our worship, music and preaching. Around a fifth of those attending Sunday services are visitors. We seek to offer the best of the Church of England tradition, drawing on the Prayer Book tradition at Choral Evensong and the richness of Common Worship, while proclaiming the Gospel afresh for each generation.

Alongside our daily pattern of worship, the Cathedral hosts a busy programme of concerts, exhibitions, conferences and civic events. Young families engage through seasonal services, children's activities and our Songbirds programme, while schools and community groups use the Cathedral throughout the year for learning, celebration and worship.

At the heart of our precinct lies College Green, together with the Cathedral café and gardens, providing a place of welcome and sanctuary for thousands of people each year. Since 2023, the Cathedral has also been responsible for the medieval Lord Mayor's Chapel, which has its own congregation and musical life.

We aspire for everyone who lives or works in Bristol and the wider Diocese to feel that Bristol Cathedral is their cathedral: a place of worship, belonging and sanctuary, where we are truly Here With You.





SHAPING THE NEXT CHAPTER

In 2026, Bristol Cathedral commissioned an independent review of its music provision to help shape a vision for the future. The review explored the strengths of our current musical life, the opportunities ahead, and the role music can play in supporting the Cathedral's worship, mission and engagement with the wider community.

The Review Group spoke with choristers, parents, clergy, musicians, congregation members and other stakeholders. One of its strongest conclusions was that music is central to the Cathedral's identity, with the Anglican choral tradition described as being "as integral to the Cathedral's identity as the stones or the sacraments."

The review affirmed the high standard of music-making across the Cathedral and highlighted the strength of our chorister programme. Choristers benefit from outstanding musical training and pastoral support, developing confidence, discipline and skills that remain with them throughout their lives. The report also recognised the success of Bristol Cathedral Choir School and the Cathedral's long-standing commitment to offering equal opportunities to both girls and boys within the choral tradition.

At the same time, the review identified exciting opportunities for growth. It encouraged the Cathedral to strengthen its engagement with Bristol's wider musical community, deepen partnerships with schools and arts organisations, broaden participation in music-making, and ensure that our musical life reflects the diversity, creativity and cultures of the city we serve. The review also challenged us to raise the profile of our music ministry and explore new ways of reaching people through worship, performance and education.

These opportunities sit at the heart of this appointment. We are seeking a Director of Music who can nurture and develop our cherished choral tradition while helping to shape a more outward-facing, connected and ambitious musical future.

Alongside this appointment, we are strengthening leadership of worship and music through the creation of a new Canon for Worship and Mission (Precentor), who will work closely with the Director of Music to ensure that music is fully integrated into the Cathedral's worship, mission and strategic priorities.

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL CHOIR SCHOOL



Bristol Cathedral Choir School is one of the Cathedral's greatest strengths and a key partner in the delivery of our music ministry. Founded in the 12th century, it is the oldest school in Bristol and one of only a handful of state choir schools in the country.

The school combines a rich musical tradition with a strong commitment to inclusion, educating boys and girls from across the city and drawing pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, faiths and communities. The Dean serves as a Foundation Governor, reflecting the close and long-standing relationship between school and Cathedral.

Today, the school educates around 1,200 students, with a further 200 pupils attending Cathedral Primary School on the shared site. As a specialist music academy, Bristol Cathedral Choir School places music at the heart of school life, with extensive opportunities for pupils to participate in choirs, orchestras and ensembles.

The Cathedral's choristers are educated at the school from Year 7 onwards, benefiting from a unique partnership that supports both musical excellence and academic achievement. This relationship is central to the success of our choir and offers significant opportunities for future collaboration, outreach and musical development.



THE ORGAN

Bristol Cathedral is home to one of the finest romantic cathedral organs in the country. Originally built by Renatus Harris in 1685 and transformed by J. W. Walker & Sons in 1907, it combines historic significance with exceptional musical versatility.

Extensively restored by Harrison & Harrison in 2025, the instrument now benefits from new action, a refurbished console and sensitive tonal revisions, reaffirming its reputation as one of the outstanding cathedral organs in the United Kingdom. Following the reopening recitals, concert organist David Briggs described it as a "Rolls Royce of organs".

The organ's scale, warmth and flexibility make it equally suited to the accompaniment of the Anglican choral tradition, solo recital performance, and the diverse musical repertoire that forms part of the Cathedral's worship and public programme.

For the successful candidate, the organ provides an exceptional instrument with which to lead worship, accompany the choir, and contribute to the Cathedral's musical life.

A full specification is available on the Cathedral website.

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION

Since 2023, Bristol Cathedral has been governed by the Chapter under the Cathedrals Measure, with the Chapter serving as the Cathedral's trustees and overseeing the Cathedral's vision, strategy and resources.

The day-to-day leadership of the Cathedral is provided by the Senior Executive Team, chaired by the Dean. The team includes the Residentiary Canons, Chief Operating Officer and departmental heads, including the Director of Music. The Director of Music is a member of the Senior Executive Team and contributes to the strategic leadership of the Cathedral, ensuring that music is fully integrated into our worship, mission and public engagement.

The Director of Music will work closely with the Canon for Worship and Mission (Precentor), colleagues across the Cathedral and Bristol Cathedral Choir School to shape and deliver the Cathedral's musical vision. This includes responsibility not only for musical excellence, but also for developing partnerships, broadening participation and strengthening the role of music in the Cathedral's life and mission.

The Music Department meets weekly, together with representatives from Bristol Cathedral Choir School, to support the effective pastoral, educational and administrative care of choristers. Regular engagement with lay clerks, choral scholars and chorister parents helps sustain the strong relationships that underpin the Cathedral's musical life.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Director of Music (Master of the Choristers)
Reporting to	The Canon for Worship and Mission
Reportees	Assistant Organist; Music Assistant; Choir Chaperone; Lay Clerks and Choral Scholars
Key Relationships	Clergy; Senior Executive Team; Vergers; Bristol Cathedral Choir School
Salary	£49,680 per annum
Benefits	• Church of England Church Workers Pension Scheme (7% employer contribution; 5% employee contribution) • Cycle to Work Scheme • Employee Assistance Programme • Staff discount in the Cathedral Shop and Café
Contract	Permanent, subject to a 4 month probationary period
Hours	40 hours per week, worked across five days. The usual rest days are Thursday and Saturday, although some flexibility may be required to meet the needs of the role. No overtime payments are available; however, Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) may be taken outside choir term time by agreement with the line manager.
Annual Leave	33 days per annum (including public holidays, to be taken outside choir term time.
Work Location	In person at the Cathedral. A desk in a shared office will be provided for the post holder.
Safer Recruitment	The successful candidate will be subject to a DBS check (Enhanced with Barred List Check), two satisfactory references and will be required to prove that they have the right to work in the UK . Safeguarding training to Senior Leadership level is required and will be provided.

RESPONSIBILITIES & ACCOUNTABILITIES

To the Dean and Chapter

- Work in partnership with the Canon for Worship and Mission on all matters relating to music for all services and events.
- Advise the Chapter on all musical matters in the Cathedral including the use and maintenance of the organs.
- Be a member of the Senior Executive Team, which oversees the intersection between strategic decision making and the operation of the Cathedral.
- Ensure that the Cathedral is a safe place for everyone, but particularly for children and vulnerable adults.

As a Member of the Senior Executive Team

- Share in the development and implementation of the Cathedral's strategy for mission.
- Contribute to the wider leadership of the Cathedral, taking an interest in the activities of others and ensuring that there is clear communication from SET to the Music Department with regard to both strategic and operational matters.
- Represent the Cathedral externally when required.
- Share the responsibility for the delivery of Cathedral plans, including working towards financial sustainability.

Safeguarding and Pastoral Care

- Ensure safeguarding policy and procedures are followed within the music department, promoting a positive safeguarding culture.
- Oversee the delivery of the health and safety policy and procedures, particularly in relation to choir activities.
- Ensure risk assessments for choir tours, internal and external events as required are undertaken.
- In tandem with the Canon for Worship and Mission, provide pastoral care to the choir. Work closely with the BCCS Staff on all matters relating to pastoral care

As Director of Music and Master of the Choristers

- Work alongside the Canon for Worship and Mission to write the Cathedral's music strategy, based on the recommendations of the music review.
- Provide leadership and direction for the music department.
- Line manage members of the music department ensuring they are well supported and developed.
- Oversee the recruitment, training and support of probationers and choristers, lay clerks and choral scholars, working closely with Bristol Cathedral Choir School staff.
- Develop good relationships and ensure regular communication with Chorister parents.
- Manage the timetabling of the Choir's participation in services, and events, internally and externally (when appropriate). Liaise closely with colleagues.
- Ensure the music department has a diverse repertoire, including new hymns for the congregation, with a particular concern to diversify the offering to reflect our city and diocese including by providing space for works by women and those of Global Majority Heritage.
- Oversee arrangements and fundraising for choir tours as and when they happen.
- Work closely with the Finance Director, COO and Canon for Worship and Mission to set the budgets for the music department each year.
- Be the budget holder for the Music department, monitoring and responding to finance information provided by the Finance Team (support will be provided for this).
- Liaise with school staff to ensure the delivery of school services at major festivals and end of year.
- Undertake a share of administrative responsibilities, including communicating with chorister parents.

External Relationships

- Work closely with the Director of Development and Visitor Experience Director to seek out opportunities to fund raise through concerts, applications for grants, and sponsorship.
- Promote the choir, choral tradition and its impact on young people to wide audiences in the city, Diocese and nationally as appropriate.
- Maintaining external relationships to ensure Bristol Cathedral Choir has an excellent reputation and profile in the city and nationally (e.g. Bristol Diocese, Cathedral Organists Association, Association of English Cathedrals, Bristol and District Organists Association, RSCM, Bristol Music Hub and other culture and music organisations).
- Develop a wide-ranging set of partnerships with musicians across different genres and styles, encouraging them to participate in Cathedral Services and events on a range of occasions.

Training, Oversight and Development

- Train the Cathedral Choir and Organists to high standards of performance.
- Nurture and promote the musical development of colleagues.
- Train clergy to act as cantors as requested.

Generic Responsibilities of All Staff

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- Undertaking Safeguarding training as required (in this instance, to Senior Leadership Level, renewed every three years)
- Adhering to the guidance in the Cathedral's staff handbook
- Willingness to act flexibly and cover for each other occasionally when required
- Participating the Cathedral's annual appraisal and review cycle
- Welcoming and helping any visitors and volunteers who need assistance, providing a high level of care and attention.
- Dealing promptly and courteously with any in-coming queries and telephone calls.
- To undertake as requested other duties as may reasonably be expected.

All staff are required to follow the policies and procedures set out in the staff handbook. All staff are expected to pay particular attention to the requirements of the child and adult safeguarding policies and health and safety. All staff are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity in the workplace. All staff are expected to support the vision and values of the Dean and Chapter of Bristol Cathedral (see above).

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and Training	• Degree in music or equivalent	• FRCO or equivalent • Teaching qualification • Safeguarding training • First Aid training
Experience	• Previous experience of leading a choir (both children and adults) in a major parish church or cathedral context	• Experience of music outreach work in schools or the community • Experience in using music notation software, eg Sibelius
Knowledge, skills and abilities	• Knowledge of a broad repertoire within the Anglican Choral Tradition and of hymnody • Experience of safeguarding in practice, in a church, school or voluntary setting • Excellent teaching and coaching skills with children and young people • Good listening communication skills and a diplomatic approach. • Able to communicate clearly and confidently with individuals, small groups and large groups. • Strong organisational skills – ability to juggle different tasks and deadlines. • Excellent ICT skills including e-mail and Microsoft office.	• Musical interests beyond the church or cathedral repertoire • Working within budgets and working with a finance department

Behaviours	• Demonstrate the Cathedral's values of being open, generous, creative and brave • Self-reliant to be able to work independently and in a self-directed way. • A team player who will work with others across departments to support the Cathedral's mission and ministry. • The ability to influence others and manage up when needed. • Comfortable to workworking within the Cathedral's inclusive approach. • Open to learning and change • Flexible and resilient, able to build relationships with a diverse range of people. • A demonstrable commitment to safeguarding children and young people.	
General	• Due to the nature and specific duties of this role there is a genuine occupational requirement (under the Equalities Act 2010) that the successful candidate will be able to demonstrate a mature and active Christian faith. • To act with integrity and honesty.	

General notes

This is a description of the job as it is currently defined. It is the practice of Bristol Cathedral to periodically review job descriptions as the priorities and requirements of the Cathedral change over time. The review would be conducted by the line manager, in consultation with the post holder. Bristol Cathedral reserves the right to make changes to the job description, in line with the procedures set out in the staff handbook.

APPLICATION PROCESS



The deadline for applications is
12 noon on Friday 16 October

Shortlisting will take place on
Monday 19 October

To apply, please complete the application form in full
and submit it to:

hr@bristol-cathedral.co.uk



If you are shortlisted, the interviews will take place on
5 and 6 November. They will be in person and will take
place at:

Bristol Cathedral, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TJ.

Overnight accommodation can be provided for
shortlisted candidates.



If you would like an informal conversation regarding
this role, please contact the Executive Assistant to the
Dean and COO, Cheryl Oxley, to arrange a phone call,
online meeting or face-to-face meeting.