

# New Places for New People

Starting new Christian  
communities:  
A practical guide

## Chapter 7

Pioneer Job  
Description

# Pioneer Job Description

Recruiting the right pioneer for your project is crucial to its success. There is a diversity of gifts, core skills and orientations in the pioneering community, which means that not every pioneer project is right for every pioneer. When writing your job description, it is important to identify the focus of the role and the skills of the person you are seeking to appoint.

Here are some pointers on the best ways to shape these important documents to find the right person who can enable the project to grow and flourish:

- Be focused, not general. Let the job description flow from the project vision you have shaped.
- Enthusiastically share the vision of the project so that potential applicants will respond to your passion.
- Be clear about the key areas of work that are vital for a potential pioneer to know about (eg forming a new Christian community, leadership, team development, community engagement).
- Resist the temptation to just download a template or copy a document you have seen elsewhere; it won't express the uniqueness of your project.
- Be realistic about expectations. It is easy to list everything you think might be a part of the role, but this could de-prioritise important aspects or cause the role to become too demanding in the time available.
- In your description, demonstrate the collaborative nature of the work and the team that the pioneer will be a part of.
- Appeal to pioneers from diverse backgrounds and educational experience, and with lived experience of the context in which the project is based.

## What kind of pioneer are you seeking?

The Methodist Church believes that pioneers will have the following ten characteristics expressed in their ministry. As you shape the person specification for your project, decide which four or five characteristics are the most important to identify in the pioneer you appoint. What characteristics are held within the team already? Base your job description and person specification around what you choose so that you can give the best opportunity for potential applicants to understand the role.

**A self-starter:** In a variety of settings, be it church, community, artistic or business, a pioneer is motivated to initiate a new project from very little or nothing.

**A visionary:** Pioneers are gifted to imagine how Christian community might be for new people and will envision others to work towards its creation.

**A team-builder:** An effective pioneer builds teams of people around a vision to enable it to become reality. By enabling others to discern their gifts, a pioneer gives a project a sustainable future beyond their unique gifts.

**Connected to others:** Creative connections to their community, to God and to individuals is the passion of pioneers. Being connected will always be a significant place of inspiration and energy. Forming friendships with those beyond the existing church comes very easily.

**Called to the edge:** Though committed to the Church, pioneers often find themselves called to and happiest at the edge. The borderland between church and community is a creative space for new ideas to emerge.

**A natural evangelist:** At ease speaking about their faith sensitively in every situation, a pioneer is always open to sharing the gospel in relevant ways.

**Committed to diversity:** Being called to the edge a pioneer notices those who are missing or excluded from Christian communities. A pioneer will plant new Christian communities that seek diversity and inclusion of all.

**Risk-taking and mistake-making:** Though not seeking to fail, a pioneer has a willingness to risk failure in the pursuit of finding out where God is leading. They see dealing with failure as an essential part of development and progress.

**Responsive to changing contexts:** A pioneer is able to pivot quickly to changes around them and turn them into fruitful opportunities for faith to be shared or for moments of growth for the new community.

**Desiring faith community:** Essential to pioneers is the desire to form new Christian communities where people can become followers of Jesus for the first time.

## Finding a pioneer with the gifts and skills for your New Place for New People (NPNP)

We celebrate the diversity of pioneers that God is calling to the Church: some will work in traditional contexts, others in contexts beyond the fringes of existing churches. To help identify a pioneer's natural leanings and relationship to the wider Church, the Church Mission Society has designed the Pioneer Spectrum.<sup>1</sup> It is a tool to help reflect on different pioneering contexts and the pioneers who work within them.

The spectrum identifies four different types of pioneers, recognising that each type is naturally inclined to work towards a different outcome. Therefore, the type of pioneer you seek to reach will depend on the vision and aims of your project.

- **Church replicators** are those who will identify a new community and seek to reproduce a church model the same as the church context they have come from.
- **Pioneer innovators** are leaders who, with their teams, venture beyond the edges of the church's structures to create faithful expressions of Christian community among people of a new context. Their innovations, which initially disturb the inherited church, in some cases become welcomed by the broader church in time.
- **Pioneer adaptors** have the creative gift to adapt innovative ideas developed elsewhere into their own contexts. Pioneer adaptors are also skilled in adapting the existing Church's rituals and rhythms to new environments.
- **Pioneer activists** are those whose gift and vocation is to shape places in order to align a community, network or industry with the values of the kingdom. These pioneers see themselves as missionaries, but without the express intention of planting a church.

A funded NPNP project requires a pioneer with the desire to begin a new Christian community which will build disciples (**within the church planting section of the pioneer spectrum**). A pioneer committed purely to community activism/social enterprise with no plan for disciple-making is not the right fit for an NPNP.

We suggest that all members of the interview panel and District NPNP Team take time to look at the diagram below and watch the video ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwwAc5sTr5M&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwwAc5sTr5M&t=1s)) to understand the type of pioneer you aim to recruit through your job description. As part of the recruitment process, it may be helpful to ask those shortlisted to use the Pioneer Spectrum cards to discern their pioneer calling in relation to the project [www.churchmissionsociety.org/files/pioneer-spectrum-cards](https://www.churchmissionsociety.org/files/pioneer-spectrum-cards)



*We celebrate the diversity of pioneers that God is calling to the Church.*



<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to Tina Hodgett and Paul Bradbury for producing this resource and to the Church Mission Society for making it available free of charge <https://pioneer.churchmissionsociety.org/pioneer-spectrum>

## Pioneer Spectrum

