



*National Speakers' Training Programme: NW of England, Autumn 2013*

## **NOTES FOR APPLICANTS**

*We have written the following points in anticipation of queries or anxieties you may have, or as a result of the experience of the last two speakers' programmes. If there is a question you still have after reading this, please email us at [info@catholicvoices.org.uk](mailto:info@catholicvoices.org.uk) and we will be in touch.*

1. We welcome applications from Catholics in all walks of life. Current Catholic Voices include academics, stay-at-home parents, carers, pharmacists, lawyers, teachers, priests, accountants, doctors, students, unemployed – married, single and divorced. Some are boisterous, others quiet; some intellectual, others more straightforward. Some vote Labour, others Tory or Lib-Dem. We welcome a variety of temperaments and personalities.
2. Although we still have a preferential option for the young, in order to counterbalance the predominance of older Catholics in the media, we will now consider applicants of any age.
3. But while we want to train a team which is broad in its outlook and makeup, we are not setting out to represent every shade of opinion and commitment within the Church. We need you to be a baptised, practising Catholic, who is committed to the Church and to your faith, with a desire (after help from us) to communicate the Church's settled positions on controversial or neuralgic issues. Please do not apply if (a) you are unhappy with aspects of the Church's core teachings; (b) you are angry with the leadership of the Church; (c) you have a reformist agenda. Catholic Voices is not a platform for any agenda, except that of the Church in communion with its bishops and Rome. We are also keen that, while different teachings vary in importance, you are positive about *all* aspects of church teaching – e.g. its social teaching as well as its pro-life stance – as an integrated whole.
4. We are not expecting you to be an accomplished media performer; the training will help you become that. We are looking for potential, enthusiasm, passion, an ability to think on your feet – and perhaps a little frustration that all too often the Church doesn't get to present its true face.
5. It helps if you are 'plugged in' to the news, and conscious of the Church's place in the stories that appear. In the interview we will ask you to refer to a recent story in which the Church appeared, and ask you to give your impressions of how it came across.
6. Although no one is under any obligation, our expectation is that, after the course, you would be open to doing radio and TV interviews – subject, of course, to your availability and other commitments.
7. Please only apply if you will be available for all three training weekends (20-22 September, 18-20 October & 15-17 November), and at least one of the interview dates (26 April and 27<sup>th</sup> April in Manchester and 29<sup>th</sup> April in London). This is an intensive programme, involving method sessions and "as-live" studio practice; *all parts of it are necessary*; so please only apply if you can make them all. You need to arrive on Friday evenings for the weekends,

when we have the first session; but we understand if work commitments will mean some having to arriving late on Friday night.

8. If you would like to know more about the training from one of those who did the Bristol course last year, we can put you in touch.
9. We are very interested in having Catholic Voices who can speak from their experience about the Church in its depth and breadth -- hence our questions about your involvement in, and knowledge of, the Church as it is lived.
10. Please consider, before applying, whether you will be free to speak in the media, i.e. whether your job or position would be in any way compromised by your appearing on air, or if there is anything in your employment contracts that could forbid you from speaking as a Catholic Voice. If you work for a church organisation, for example, you may find yourself restricted. Before applying, please ensure that, if you are accepted for the training, you will be free to present your own view on issues, without having to clear it with any organisation you work for. If you are in any doubt about this, please speak to us.
11. Equally (and this may apply also to those working in church organisations), please do not use our training as a means of enhancing the communication of the organisation you work for. You must be free and willing to speak on a whole range of issues, not just those of interest to your organisation.
12. The training itself is free; but if you are earning we would expect you to contribute to the cost of weekend accommodation, which would help us to subsidise participants who are not salaried. *No one should be discouraged from applying because of cost.*
13. Interviews with the three coordinators will last 10 minutes. The first three minutes will be an "as-live interview" on an imaginary news story which we will send you in advance. The rest of the interview will be asking you questions in relation to the answers you put in your form.
14. Remember that, if you are not accepted for interview -- or, after the interview, the training - - this does not necessarily reflect on your abilities, but may simply be the result of the places being over-subscribed, and our need to get a balance in the group. We are really grateful, whatever happens, for your interest and enthusiasm.

*If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch. You can reach the coordinators on [info@catholicvoices.org.uk](mailto:info@catholicvoices.org.uk).*

Austen Ivereigh, Jack Valero, Kathleen Griffin (coordinators)