02 Introducing individuals to the organ

(with thanks to our partners at the Society of Women Organists for permission to quote/adapt from their pluSWOne initiative).

A. Who to recruit

You can support Play the Organ Year by introducing the organ to anyone of your acquaintance. It might be easier or more obvious if they already play a keyboard instrument and/or have shown some interest in the organ and its music, but that is really not essential – Play the Organ Year is designed to introduce anyone to the organ, regardless of musical ability or history.

If the recruit is under 18 years old or a vulnerable adult, please follow local guidelines regarding safeguarding in your place of work or worship. In the UK this means that a parent/guardian must be present throughout and physical contact is to be avoided. You can find further advice in our guidance sheet *06 Safeguarding, health and safety, and insurance*.

B. How long should the demonstration be?

The ideal length of the demonstration is 30-60 minutes but of course a one-to-one introduction affords the opportunity for great flexibility depending on the situation.

C. What to include in the demonstration

To ensure a fun and memorable experience, we recommend focusing on experimentation and playing, with spoken instruction or explanations kept to a minimum. We have produced *My First*

Encounter guidance sheets, available in the organiser resources area, which provide material for you to use.

The short film by Play the Organ Year patron Anna Lapwood MBE at **www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzK-tYFGQx4** is also very useful either to help your planning or to share with your recruit afterwards.

You can also find more information on such sessions via the Society of Women Organists' excellent plusSWOne initiative at **www.societyofwomenorganists.co.uk/pluswone-guidance-notes**.

D. What's next?

If your introducee is interested in going further with the organ, perhaps by taking organ lessons, then you may be able to recommend a local teacher, or refer them to the Royal College of Organists' *Find a Teacher* service at **www.rco.org.uk/organteachers**.

Regardless of whether they are interested in playing the organ again or not, you should definitely let them know where they can hear live organ music locally, and perhaps encourage them to explore the huge array of organ music available via all the popular music services.

Our guidance sheet *07 Exploring further* contains lots of advice that can be shared with anyone who is interested in continuing their journey with the organ.

E. Important – let us know how you got on!

We want to share the organ with a record number of people in 2025, so it's vital that as a Play the Organ Year event organiser, you let us know how you got on.

You can simply let us know how many people heard the organ (at a First Encounter recital) or got a chance to play it (at a Play the Organ session). Or, even better, you could take and send some photos of people at the organ console (following safeguarding rules if appropriate: in the UK this means that you first ask the permission of the parent/guardians of those aged under 18, offering to take only a back view if preferred). Ask your participants for their thoughts on the experience, and of course share your own.

You can email all of this to us at **play@rco.org.uk** or visit our website at **www.rco.org.uk/play** to complete the feedback form you will find there.