## Description: S:\Safeguarding Officer\Diocesan Branding 2011\LOGO\JPEG - for general use\RGB - for in-house printing\DP RGB horizontal Main logo.jpghttp://www.bethanyhope.co.uk/images/C_OF_logo_v2.jpg

## Step by Step Safer Recruitment Process

**Finding and recruiting** the right people to work with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, can be difficult. What follows is a safer recruitment checklist to help make sure that dioceses and parishes recruit and appoint safely the most appropriate people as employees or volunteers. It is a criminal offence for an individual who is barred from working with vulnerable groups to apply for a regulated activity role and it is a criminal offence for an organisation to appoint a barred1 person to a regulated activity role.

1. **Be clear about who is responsible for appointments**.

(i) While there will always be local variations, responsibility for appointing clergy and licensed or approved lay ministers normally rests with the Bishop.

(ii) Responsibility for paid posts, in the diocesan offices, is usually with the Diocesan Secretary.

(iii) In Cathedrals the responsibility for appointments is governed by the Cathedrals Measure 1999 and/or the constitution of the relevant cathedral.

(iv) In the case of religious communities because they are independent charities appointments will be governed by their constitutions.

(v) In local Churches the responsibility for appointments and approval of paid officers and Volunteers rests with the Parochial Church Council

In each case it is important that each of these bodies is clear about who is responsible for the recruitment process. Responsibility can be delegated but it is important that the person to whom it is delegated is capable, competent and trained in safer recruitment and is also able to keep personal matters confidential. You must seek advice if it is unclear who has the responsibility for appointments.

Set a **recruitment panel** at the start of the recruitment process. The recruitment panel will both **shortlist** the applications and **interview.** You are advised always to have more than one person conducting the interview process, and preferably three. Try to ensure a balanced panel with regard to gender, ethnicity and knowledge.

**2. Have a policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders**. Applicants for paid and volunteer positions must be clear about how they will be treated if they are ex-offenders. You can find a sample policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders here.

**3. Ensure that there are safeguarding policies in place**. The Church of England has a

range of national safeguarding policies. You can find them here. The joint statement of

safeguarding principles, which appears in all national safeguarding policies must be used

in the recruitment process to ensure the applicant is aware of the safeguarding approach

of the Church of England**.**

1 There are two barring lists held by the DBS. One holds details of those barred from working with children and the other holds details of those barred from working with vulnerable adults.

**4. Job role and Criminal Record Checks.**

Have a clear job (paid), or role (volunteer) description, which sets out what tasks the applicant will do and what skills are required. The job or role description will also say whether it is eligible for and requires a criminal records check, and if so the level of the check. If it is a paid role this must be a formal job description / person specification. If it is a voluntary role, a simple job role may be used. You can find a model template for a volunteer job role here

In broad summary, it is the policy of the Church of England that all those who work regularly with children and / or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, including those on a rota, must have, where appropriate, an **enhanced criminal record check** (with / without a check of the barred list, as appropriate). In addition, those who work only occasionally with vulnerable groups will also be asked to apply for enhanced checks, provided they are eligible. Those who manage or supervise those who work with vulnerable groups and those in a leadership capacity who carry responsibility for safeguarding, will also be required to obtain an enhanced check, provided they are eligible. You can find Criminal Record Eligibility information here.

Have an **advertisement** prepared that contains all necessary information about the role.

**5 Application Form and References**. An application form will always be necessary in a paid role to assess the person’s suitability for the role. An application form will also be good practice when recruiting for a voluntary role. You can find a model template application form for a volunteer here.

Always ask for and take up **references.** Ask referees specifically about an individual’s suitability to work with vulnerable people. Ensure that you carefully examine application forms and references and make sure that the information that has been provided is consistent and the church is provided with a satisfactory explanation for any discrepancies and / or any gaps in an applicant’s personal history and / or career. If anything is unclear in the reference, contact the referee to clarify the position. You can find a model template reference request letter for volunteers here.

**6 The Confidential Declaration**. At the start of the process, where an individual is going to work or volunteer with vulnerable people, ask him / her to complete a ‘Confidential Declaration’ which, in broad summary, asks if there is any reason why he / she should not be working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect. It can also help to identify any issues that might need resolving at an early stage. Having a criminal record may not necessarily be a bar to working with children or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect.

The **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser** is there to provide advice to the person responsible for the appointment and must be contacted if an applicant discloses any information in the Confidential Declaration. You can find a copy of the Confidential Declaration here.Should the applicant not wish to complete the Confidential Declaration, which is entirely his / her choice, the application must not proceed further and must be terminated.

**7 Planning and conducting the Interview / discussion**.

The **recruitment panel** will both shortlist the applications and interview. **Shortlist** according to whether applicants fulfil the requirements of the person specification. Shortlist before inviting for interview. Ensure the shortlisted applicants receive the same letter of invitation to interview, supplying them with all the necessary information.

Have a face-to-face interview or discussion with pre-planned and clear questions to assess a person’s suitability for a role. Design questions to test the applicants’ suitability for role and which are directly related to the skills and experiences asked for in the person specification.

**Check the Confidential Declaration** and the references. In paid roles (and sometimes in volunteering roles) the candidate’s identity will need to be checked by asking him / her to bring photographic ID as well as evidence of his / her relevant qualifications. Include questions about an applicant’s values, attitude to working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and motives for wanting to engage in such work. Always ask if he / she knows of any reason why he / she should not be working with children or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect or if there are any pending cases / issues which could affect him / her or his / her ability to carry out the role.

If the applicant discloses any matter during the interview that relates to children and / or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and which may affect the applicant’s suitability for the role, then this must be referred to the **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser** for advice. You can find a model interview template for volunteers here.

**8 Asking for a Criminal Record Check**. If the person / chair of the interview panel conducting the interview / discussion is minded to recommend approval, then the applicant must be asked to carry out an appropriate criminal record check. A list of roles, which are eligible for enhanced criminal record checks are outlined here. Special arrangements apply to overseas applicants, (see paragraph 9 below).

Provided they are eligible, an enhanced criminal record check must always be required in relation to people sent abroad to work with vulnerable groups (children or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect) as part of the UK recruitment process. Should the applicant not wish to apply for a criminal record check, which is entirely his / her choice, the application must **not** proceed further and must be terminated.

**9 Overseas applicants.** If a candidate/applicant etc. for a position that is eligible for a DBS check is coming from overseas who, either has never lived in the UK or spent a period of time (i.e. lived abroad), the person making the appointment should request an additional check and ask the applicant to obtain criminality information (also known as a certificate of good conduct/character) from his/her relevant embassy/high commission (or police force). This means that in addition to the DBS check, the candidate/applicant must seek this additional check to cover the time he/she spent abroad. (Further advice can be found on the Home Office website).2

If such information is not available from the embassy/high commission etc. or if there are concerns about the reliability of the information provided, the person(s) making the appointment should take extra care when taking up references and checking any previous employment record. In such cases, additional references should be sought and at least one reference from a previous employer should be contacted by telephone as well as by letter.

**10 Approval.** The decision to appoint to voluntary or paid work must be made only by those who have that responsibility, (recruitment panel - see paragraph 1 above). ***The start date or appointment must not be confirmed until the relevant criminal record check is received and examined.*** (see Criminal Record Checks).

Criminal record checks that are not clear (i.e. which contain information of, for instance, criminal convictions or cautions or additional information such as arrests) must always be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice – (see Criminal Record Checks – when a disclosure is blemished)

All paid posts will receive a letter of appointment. It is also good practice for volunteers to receive a letter of appointment, which can set out both the church’s commitment to its volunteers and what it hopes from its volunteers. You can find a model template of appointment here. Included with the appointment letter should be a copy of the “Statement of Safeguarding Principles” (here) and a copy of the “Peterborough Diocese Safeguarding Leaflet”.

**11 Induction.** Employees or volunteers whose roles involve working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect must receive relevant safeguarding training from the Diocese after starting their role, regardless of previous experience. They must also attend regular updates.

**12 Probationary / settling in Period**. It is good practice to have a period of probation, (for instance, 6 months) for any paid role or a settling in period for volunteers when the volunteer and the church can see whether the volunteer is suited to the particular role. During these periods relevant training can be planned and support can be arranged. In addition, regular meetings with the **supervisor** can be organised to discuss any issues etc. that arise. For paid roles, at the end of the probationary period a person must be confirmed in his / her role in writing.

**13** **Supervision and regular review.** All paid posts will be subject to management, supervision and appraisal. For all volunteer posts, working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, it is good practice to ensure regular supervision and conduct a review regularly, as the role requires, (e.g. annually) so that volunteers feel supported and issues can be discussed and/or resolved.

2 [Home Office advice on overseas applicants.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants)

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