

# The 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 ensure we 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 barred person to a regulated activity role.

The responsibility for appointments and approval of paid officers and volunteers rests with the PCC.

In practice, this responsibility is delegated to team leaders who are trained in safer recruitment.

The PCC receives regular updates concerning who has been appointed to different teams.

## *The Recruitment Process:*

All roles within the church have a clear job description, which not only sets out the tasks the person will carry out, but also who they are directly accountable to.

Any vacant role within the church will be advertised verbally or via the Enotices. It will be made clear that anyone interested will need to engage in a period of exploration and discernment with the team leader.

As a parish, we are prioritising vocational conversations: helping people to hear and respond to God's call to serve. The safer recruitment process links well to this discernment process, ensuring that the right people are in the right places.

Under normal circumstances, a person new to church will not be allowed to volunteer for a role (particularly working with children and vulnerable adults) until they have been attending church regularly for 6 months or more. It is usual that the rector will meet with each new person to talk about where God may be calling them to serve.

When someone is responding to an advertised need (which involves working with children and vulnerable adults), they will be asked to complete an application form which will include a request for a referee.

Once the application has been received, the team leader will have a conversation with the applicant and will call for references and ask the applicant to complete a Confidential Declaration form. During the conversation, questions must be asked that assess the values, motives, behaviours and attitudes of those applying for roles, particularly those which involve working with vulnerable groups. If the team leader is minded to recommend approval then the applicant must be asked to complete an appropriate criminal record check (if appropriate). 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 enhanced check, provided they are eligible.

The decision to appoint to a voluntary or paid work must be made only by the PCC (usually delegated to team leaders for voluntary positions). The start date or appointment cannot be confirmed until the relevant criminal record check is received and examined. Further advice may need to be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. We endeavour to ensure that volunteers to receive a letter of appointment, which sets out both the parish's commitment to its volunteers and what it hopes from its volunteers.

#### *Induction.*

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

#### *Settling in Period.*

A paid appointment will have a period of probation (usually 6 months) and there will be a settling in period for volunteers (usually 3 months) when the volunteer and the group to which they have been assigned can see whether the volunteer is suited to the particular role. During these periods relevant training will be planned and support will be arranged. In addition, regular meetings with the team leader will 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.

#### *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, there will be regular supervision and a review will be conducted annually, or as the role requires. as the role requires. This is to ensure that volunteers feel supported and issues can be discussed and/or resolved.

#### *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).

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.

*The recruitment of ex-offenders.*

- as an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), The Yare Valley Churches complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly
- The Yare Valley Churches undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed
- The Yare Valley Churches can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that The Yare Valley Churches are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended)
- The Yare Valley Churches can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
- [The Yare Valley Churches is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background
- The written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process
- The Yare Valley Churches actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records
- The Yare Valley Churches select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience
- an application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position
- The Yare Valley Churches ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences
- The Yare Valley Churches also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- at interview, or in a separate discussion, The Yare Valley Churches ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment
- The Yare Valley Churches undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- The Yare Valley Churches works closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and will implement any course of action they advise.

