

# Christ Church, Newark

## Safer Recruitment Policy

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This 'Safer Recruitment Policy' is meant to act as a helpful and concise summary of the Church of England's 'Code of Safer Recruitment'. The up-to-date guidance offered in the 'Code of Safer Recruitment' takes precedence over anything contained in this summary, which is intended only to supplement the overall code.

According to the code, Safer Recruitment procedures should apply to all roles involving substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults.

In the context of Christ Church, Newark, these roles are deemed to include:

- Children's / Youth group leaders and helpers (including leaders of Sanctuary)
- Youth Music Group leaders
- The co-ordinator for the Light Bite lunch
- Those authorised to distribute Holy Communion in people's homes

The PCC does not include the following roles, as they do not currently meet this criteria:

- Welcome team
- People on the tea/coffee rota
- Those operating the sound desk
- Those giving readings, occasional talks, or leading prayers during services
- Those assisting with the distribution of communion during services
- Those in the adult music groups
- Those leading the adult music groups
- Those providing prayer ministry after the service (as this is publicly visible and does not involve substantial contact with either children or vulnerable adults. However, prayer ministry team members will undergo basic safeguarding awareness training)
- Helpers at the Light Bite lunch

As new groups or events begin, the PCC will consider whether the leaders and helpers need to be recruited using the full 'Safer Recruitment' procedures.

The 'Code of Safer Recruitment' does not cover any "retrospective" recruitment. Safer recruitment process have been in place in the Church of England since 2016, therefore anyone appointed after this date should have been subject to the recruitment process that was in force at that time. Even if people were appointed or joined before this date, it is not appropriate to go back and repeat the recruitment process at this stage, as long as the three-yearly DBS checks (where required) are carried out and the safeguarding training is up to date.

## **Information Provided to Applicants**

When applying for a volunteer role that falls within the scope of this code, all applicants must be given access to the following information:

- The church body's:
  - Statement of its commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
  - Safeguarding Policy.
  - Code of Safer Working Practice (one copy needs to be signed and returned).
  - Safer Recruitment Policy.
  - Whistleblowing Policy.
  - Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- The volunteer role description and person specification.
- The selection procedure for the role.
- A privacy notice detailing how the volunteer's personal data will be processed during the recruitment and selection process.
- The Confidential Declaration Form (see below)

Many of these documents can be provided via a link to the church website:

[www.christchurchnewark.co.uk/safer-recruitment](http://www.christchurchnewark.co.uk/safer-recruitment)

## **Confidential Declaration Form**

A Church of England Confidential Declaration Form (CDF) must be completed by all applicants for volunteer positions that engage in regulated activity or volunteer roles which, although outside regulated activity, are still eligible for an Enhanced DBS check. If an applicant refuses to complete a CDF the recruitment process must be terminated.

The CDF must be submitted at the same time as the volunteer application form and for re-checks, it must be submitted at the point of the DBS application being made.

All recruitment documentation must detail that a completed CDF is required for that role and the basis on which that requirement is made.

The CDF must only be viewed by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment & selection process.

## **Shortlisting**

Shortlisting must be conducted by the person responsible for the appointment and at least one other person.

Applicants must be shortlisted for interview based on the evidence provided in their volunteer application form and CDF and only those who meet all the essential criteria as defined on the person specification must be shortlisted (even where there is only one applicant).

Application forms must be properly scrutinised and any gaps or queries (e.g. in employment/education/church/volunteering history etc) must be highlighted and marked for further exploration if the applicant is shortlisted and invited to interview.

## **Interviews**

All volunteer roles falling within the scope of this code require an interview of shortlisted candidates (even where there is only one applicant).

Interviews must be held with a panel of at least two, one of whom must:

- have completed the Church of England Safer Recruitment & People Management training within the last three years
- be competent in interviewing
- possess the appropriate expertise to assess the candidate's competence in the role.

Wherever possible, interview panel members must not be closely related to the candidate. If this is unavoidable, the conflict of interest must be declared, and arrangements must be made for an additional person to be present.

Interviews must explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults through a combination of questions that encompass the church body's values and expected behaviours, with questions that focus on establishing skills, knowledge, qualifications & previous experience.

Any gaps, anomalies or discrepancies that have been identified in the application documentation during the shortlisting process must be discussed with the individual during the interview and a satisfactory explanation provided. A record of these discussions must be made on the interview paperwork.

## **Pre-Appointment Checks**

All appointments to volunteer posts that fall within the scope of this code must be subject to the completion of satisfactory pre-appointment checks and procedures, as outlined in the following requirements.

All pre-appointment checks must be:

- Confirmed in writing/email.
- Scrutinised to ensure authenticity.
- Documented and recorded.
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received.

All volunteer applicants must be able to provide proof of identity.

References:

- A minimum of two written references must be obtained.
- Referees must be over 18 and not be family members or relatives.
- 'Self-supplied' or generic and verbal references must not be accepted.
- At least one of the references must be from outside of the current church body.
- At least one of the references must comment on the applicant's ability to work with the group with whom he/she will be volunteering.
- If the applicant is currently working/volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or has done within the past two years, then a reference must be sought from that organisation.
- If the applicant has come to the church body from another church body within the past two years, a reference must be sought from that previous church body.

DBS:

- If a DBS check is required for the volunteer role, an application at the appropriate level for the role must be made.
- If an applicant refuses to allow their DBS certificate to be viewed, then the onboarding process must be terminated.
- If the DBS reveals any relevant information, the advice of the Diocesan safeguarding team should be sought regarding the best way forward.

Overseas Criminal Record Checks:

- If an Enhanced DBS (with/without Barred List/s) check is required for the role and the applicant has lived, worked or volunteered outside the United Kingdom, in the same country, for a continuous period of six months or more at any point within the previous 10 years, an overseas criminal records check must also be carried out.
- If the appropriate documentation cannot be obtained from an embassy, the applicant must provide evidence of their attempt to obtain a certificate.

- If the appropriate documentation cannot be obtained, the applicant must provide evidence of their attempt to obtain a certificate, or if it is not safe to try and obtain such a check, additional references should be sought wherever possible.

Qualifications:

- If required for the role, applicants must be able to provide original proof of qualifications.

Professional Status:

- If required for the role, applicants must be able to provide original proof of professional status.

Health Information:

- Where the nature of a role makes it reasonable to do so, volunteers who are successful at interview must be asked to provide health information.
- If there are any queries about a volunteer's health in relation to the post applied for, clarification of this must form part of the pre-appointment checks.

### **Appointment**

All volunteer roles that fall within the scope of this code must be subject to the completion of satisfactory pre-appointment checks and procedures (see Section 4.8).

A start date for the volunteer must only be agreed when all pre-appointment checks and actions are satisfactorily completed.

All volunteers that fall within the scope of this code must be issued with a volunteer agreement.

All volunteers must receive written statements of:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding, including the identity and responsibilities of those within the church body with designated safeguarding responsibilities.
- Standards of conduct and behaviour expected.
- Other relevant procedures/documentation e.g. whistleblowing, disciplinary procedures, privacy notice relevant to appointment.

All volunteers must sign a document to indicate that they have received, understood and agree to adhere to all the written statements identified above as well as the role description for their volunteer role.

## **Induction**

All volunteer roles that fall within the scope of this code must undergo a safeguarding induction process appropriate to the role being undertaken.

Induction must include:

- Mandatory training and information about the church body's safeguarding policies and procedures, including to whom concerns should be reported.
- One to one meeting(s) with the individual to whom the volunteer reports.
- Expectations in the role, objectives (where appropriate) and arrangements for ongoing support.

The induction process must be evaluated and reviewed regularly as part of the continuous improvement of the safer people management cycle.

## **Settling In Period**

A settling in period must be in place for all volunteer roles that fall within the scope of this code.

During this period, regular meetings must be scheduled and prioritised between the responsible person and the volunteer and safeguarding (process, understanding and behaviours) must form a core part of these meetings.

Any safeguarding concerns must be thoroughly discussed and documented and appropriate next steps taken, including discussion with the appropriate member of the safeguarding team relevant to the body (e.g. PSO/CSO/DSO) where necessary.

The settling in period must include an element of direct observation of the individual by an appropriate member of the relevant team, in order to provide reassurance that the volunteer is demonstrating safe behaviour, maintaining appropriate boundaries, can spot causes of concern and knows when to report and who to.

Basic and Foundation (where the latter is required) safeguarding training must be completed during the settling-in period.