

CHURCH SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

**SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY**

# **INTRODUCTION**

The safe recruitment of the church is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Insert Church Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults we come into contact with. As a Church, we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

# **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy are to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse or be a danger to children or vulnerable adults or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of the Church’s recruitment policy are as follows:

* to ensure that the best possible staff and volunteers are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
* to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
* to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, disability or age;
* to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe - September 2018, the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
* to ensure that the Church meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Individuals involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

If an individual involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familiar relationship with an applicant they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual’s application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

# **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILTIES**

It is the responsibility of the leadership team involved in recruitment to:

* ensure that the Church operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work within the Church
* promote welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults at every stage of the procedure.

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

Any position undertaken at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Insert name of Church\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

* frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
* provides the opportunity for unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults.

# **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

## **Advertising**

To ensure equality of opportunity, the Church will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible; normally this entails an external advertisement.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA).

## **Application Forms**

The Church uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Incomplete application forms will not be shortlisted.

The application form will include the applicant’s declaration regarding convictions and working with children, and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. CVs will not be accepted.

It is unlawful for the Church to employ anyone who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults to apply for a position at the Church. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS.

## **Job Descriptions and Person Specifications**

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job.

## **References**

References for shortlisted applicants will be taken up immediately after interview.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the Church. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current / most recent employment does / did not involve work with children or vulnerable adults, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children or vulnerable adults (if applicable). The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

## **Interviews**

There will be a face-to-face interview and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant’s ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has not been disclosed on the application form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training or refresher training as applicable.

Our safer recruitment trained staff member is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original document will only be accepted, and photocopies will be taken.

# **OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS**

In accordance with the recommendations a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees will be carried out.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

* the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the Church’s standard terms and conditions of employment;
* verification of the applicant's identity (where that has not previously been verified);
* the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the Church considers to be satisfactory;
* where the position amounts to "regulated activity" the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the Church considers to be satisfactory;
* where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's or adults Barred List\*;
* verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
* any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
* verification of professional qualifications which the Church deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files and information transferred to the Church’s SCR.

## **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with or having access to children or vulnerable adults. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered ‘SPENT’ must be declared when applying for any position within the Church.

## **DBS Checks**

The Church applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children and adult’s Barred List in respect of all positions at the Church which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults by inclusion on the Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

It is the Church’s policy that the DBS disclosure should be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee, if this is not possible the member of staff must not be left unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults at any time until a DBS check has been obtained.

The Church will periodically re check DBS checks for employees (ideally every 4 years) or if there has been a break in employment.

## **Portability of DBS Certificates Checks**

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of £13 per annum, (free for volunteers) which is payable by the applicant.

This allows for portability of a Certificate across employers. The Church will:

* Obtain consent from the applicant to carry out an update search
* Confirm the Certificate matches the individual’s identity

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore employees/applicants should bring their Certificate to Church within 14 days of issue to be checked.

## **Dealing with convictions**

The Church operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:

* the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
* how long ago the offence occurred;
* one-off or history of offences;
* changes in circumstances,
* decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts. A decision will be made following this meeting. In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Church will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the Church may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the Church will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The Church does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

## **Induction Programme**

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the Church polices and procedures, including the Safeguarding Policy, the Code of Conduct, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

## **Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff (SCR)**

In addition to the various records kept on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept. The Single Centralised Register will contain details of the following:

* All employees who are employed to work or volunteer at the Church.
* position held within the Church.
* Date of employment.
* Number and Date of DBS check.
* Highest qualification and level.
* Identity checked.
* Record Retention / Data Protection

The Church is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the Church will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. This documentation will be retained by the Church for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the Church. All information retained on employees is kept in the Office in a locked and secure cabinet.

This policy is reviewed and amended as required (at least annually)

The last review of this policy was:

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