**Benefice of Winscombe and Sandford**

**Safer Recruitment Policy and Guidance**

This policy and guidance has been written using the C of E Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance.

Further information can be found within the guidance which can be accessed at

https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance

The aim of this guidance is:

* To attract the best possible individuals to all roles through inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent processes
* Identify and reject individuals who are unsuitable by following a proportionate but thorough selection process
* Ensure that robust induction, oversight and supervision processes are in place for those working and volunteering with children and vulnerable adults.

This guidance applies to the appointment all roles within a Church body that involve substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. This includes senior clergy as well as parish priests and all those in other roles, whether paid or voluntary. With such a variety of roles across the Church of England, the wording of the Requirements may not fit exactly in relation to a particular role, but the principles should always be made to apply.

**1. Responsibilities**

A responsible person must be identified for the appointment of each role. The responsible person is accountable for the recruitment and appointment into that role and must have been safely recruited to their role.

A responsible person must also be identified for the ongoing support of the person appointed.

The responsible person must be familiar with the requirements of the C of E Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance and be up to date with their current safeguarding training.

**2. Role Descriptions and Person Specification.**

All roles both voluntary and paid must have a written role description and person specification. This is likely to be more detailed for an employed post than a voluntary role.

Role descriptions must make any safeguarding aspects clear and refer to the Church’s commitment to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Person Specification will be used for drawing up any advertisements or notices about the role and forms the criteria for evaluating applicants and assessing candidates, helping to identify key ares for the focus of interview questions.

**3. Advertising a Role**

All adverts/notices must include the following details

• A statement which confirms the Church body’s commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment.

• The essential elements of the person specification required for the role.

• The pre-appointment checks that are required for the role.

A ‘Personal Approach’ to engage applicants must only be used where it can be evidenced that there are no other viable options. Where it is used, this guidance must be followed.

**4. Application Process**

Every candidate is expected to complete an application form.

When applying for a post all applicants must be given access to the following information:

The Church body’s:

• Statement of its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-bring of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

• Safeguarding Policy

• Safer Recruitment Policy

• Whistle Blowing Policy

• The role description and person specification

• The selection procedure for the post

• A privacy notice detailing how the applicants personal data will be processed during the recruitment process.

A standardised application form must be used for recruitment to all posts that fall within scope of this policy.

CVs must not be accepted on their own.

All application forms must ask for:

• Personal details including current names, former names, date of birth and contact details (j=home address, email address, telephone number)

• Qualifications where appropriate/required

• A personal statement addressing the criteria set out in the Person Specification, including details of the skills and attributes the applicant believes they bring to the role.

• A separate Confidential Declaration Form (see section 5 below)

• Request for appropriate references (see Section 8 below)

• A declaration that all information provided on the application form is “True and complete”

All application forms for volunteer roles must ask for:

• Full history and description of work with children, young, people and/or vulnerable adults, whether paid or voluntary, with dates and, where applicable an explanation of any gaps.

• Full history and description of church involvement where it includes work with children, young, people and/or vulnerable adults, with dates and, where applicable an explanation of any gaps.

All application forms for paid roles must ask for:

Present (or most recent) employment and reason for leaving

Full history since leaving school of education, employment and any voluntary work, as well as an explanation of gaps.

**5.Confidential Declarations**

A Church of England Confidential Declaration form must be completed by all applicants for positions which involve substantial contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults which requires an enhanced DBS Check.

All recruitment documentation for such roles must detail the requirement for a Confidential Declaration and the basis on which that requirement is made.

If an applicant does not want to complete a Confidential Declaration form then the application process will be terminated.

The Confidential Declaration form must only be viewed by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment and selection process. The form will be retained appropriately in line with current data protection legislation.

**6. Shortlisting Applicants**

Shortlisting must be conducted by the person responsible for the appointment (see Section 1 above)

The shortlisting process will be led by the responsible person with support from other members f the interview panel (minimum of two people).

For paid roles shortlisting decisions will be recorded so they can be evidenced and, if requested feedback provided to those not shortlisted.

Applicant will be shortlisted for interview based on the evidence provided in their application form and usually only those who meet all the essential criteria in the person specification will be shortlisted (even where there is one applicant)

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

Interview candidates will receive:

• Confirmation of the interview

• Details of the interview process and who will be present

• A further copy of the role description/person specification

• Details of any tasks or other selection activities that will form part of the interview

• Details of any documentation they must provide

**7. Interviews and Assessment.**

All posts require an interview of shortlisted candidates (even where there is only one applicant.

Interviews will normally be held face to face.

Interviews will be held with a panel of at least two, one of whom must have completed the Safer recruitment training within the last three years. The members of the panel need to be competent in interviewing and have the appropriate expertise to assess the candidates suitability for 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 will be made for an additional person to be present.

All interviews will explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults through a range of questions.

Any gaps, anomalies or discrepancies that have been identified in the application form during shortlisting will be discussed with the candidate during the interview and a satisfactory explanation needs to be provided. Such discussions will be noted on the interview paperwork.

Interviews for voluntary roles may be more informal but will still involve a minimum of two people. The conversation should be structured to help decide whether the person is suitable to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, as well as their ability to fulfil the role and work with others.

Interview questions for both paid and voluntary roles should explore:

• Skills, abilities and motivation to work in the role

• Previous experience

• Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries

• Reasons for moving on from previous work (where applicable)

• Understanding of safeguarding issues and good practice

**8. Pre-appointment Checks**

All appointments will be subject to the completion of satisfactory pre-employment checks and procedures.

All pre-appointment checks must be:

• Confirmed in writing

• Scrutinised to ensure authenticity

• Documented and recorded

• Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or there are any discrepancies in information received

All applicants must be able to provide proof of identity.

References

References should be sought directly from the relevant organisation and ideally be supplied on headed paper to verify the legitimacy of the organisation providing it.

Details requested should include:

• Where the individual has been employed/volunteered/studied

• Dates of employment/volunteering, or duration of study

• The opposition held or study undertaken

• Suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults

• Any concerns about the  individual whorling with children, young people or vulnerable adults

• Any substantial allegations, disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, in relation to working with children, young people or vulnerable adults

• Reasons for leaving employment, voluntary work, training or study (if known)

it is recommended that wherever possible written references should be followed up by telephone to verify the identity of the referee. This scan also be used to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies between information provided by the referee and applicant. It is good practice to keep a note of the call together with the written references.

For all roles:

• A minimum of two written references must be obtained

• Referees must be over 18 and not be family members or relatives

• ‘Self supplied’, ‘to whom it may concern’ and verbal references must not be accepted

For volunteers:

• At least one of the references must be from outside of the current Church body

• At least one reference must comment on the applicants ability to work with the group with whom he/she will be volunteering

• if the applicant is currently working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or has done so within the past two years, a reference must be sought from that organisation

• if the applicant has come to the Church body from anther Church body within the past two years, a reference must be sought from that previous Church body

For employees:

• At least one reference must be from the applicant’s current/most recent employer and/or voluntary position

• A minimum referencing period of two years must be applied. This means it many be necessary to request more than two references depending on the applicant’s work history

DBS Checks

• If a DBS check is required for the role an application at the appropriate level must be made

• If an applicant does not want to complete a Confidential Declaration form or allow the results of is/her DBS check to be seen, the application must be terminated.

Qualifications

If applicable, applicants must be able to provide original proof of qualifications

Professional Status

If applicable, 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, applicants who are successful at interview must be asked to provide health information.

• If there are any queries about an individual’s health in relation to the post applied for, clarification of this must form part of the pre-employment checks

**9. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

The role description for all posts must state whether the role is eligible for a DBS check and, if so, at what levels.

All those who meet the criteria of Regulated Activity must have an enhanced DBS check (with/without a check of the barred list)

All those who manage or supervise roles and those in leadership roles are required to have an enhanced DBS check (with/without a check of the barred list)

DBS certificates obtained in previous or other employment/voluntary positions must not be used unless the applicant is registered with the ‘DBS Update Service’ and the workforce and level of check detailed on their most recent DBS check meets the requirements of the role for which they are being considered.

DBS checks must be reviewed every three years.

10. Criminal Records

The Church body must have a clear process for assessing and making decisions in respect of criminal record information.

The process for assessment and decision may involve seeking advice for the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

**11. Appointment**

All appointments are subject to completion of satisfactory pre-employment checks (see Section 8 above)

A start date can only be confirmed once all pre-employment checks have been completed and verified

All employees must be issued with a Contract of Employment

All volunteers must be issued with a Volunteer Agreement

All those appointed must receive written statements of:

• Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding including the identity of those with designated safeguarding responsibilities

• Safe practice and the standards of conduct  and behaviour expected

• Other relevant procedure/documentation

**12. Induction**

All appointments must undergo an appropriate induction process, whether paid or unpaid.

Induction must include:

• Mandatory training and information about safeguarding policies and procedures and how to report concerns

• One to one meetings with the individual to whom the inductee reports

• Expectations in the role, objectives (where appropriate). And arrangements for ongoing support

• Safeguarding training for their new role to ensure up to date knowledge and skills

The induction process must be evaluated and reviewed regularly

**13.Probationary/Settling in Period**

A probationary/settling in period must be in place for all appointments

Regular meetings must take place between the individual and the responsible person and

safeguarding must form a core part of these meetings.

Any safeguarding concerns must be thoroughly discussed and documented and appropriate

steps taken.

For employees their contract must detail the grounds on which their probationary period

can be extended or terminated, which must include failure to complete Safeguarding

Training, or failure to comply with the Safeguarding Policy.

The probationary period must include an element of direct observation of the individual to ensure that he/she is demonstrating safe behaviour, maintaining appropriate boundaries, can spot causes for concern and knows when to report and who to.

14. Ongoing Support, Accountability, Oversight and Supervision

Arrangements must be made for ongoing support to be carried out.

Regular meetings should take place between the individual and the responsible person and safeguarding must form a core part of these on-going meetings.

Any safeguarding concerns must be thoroughly discussed and documented.

If an individual in post becomes involved in criminal activity or other unacceptable behaviour, the individual must bring it to the immediate attention of the responsible person so that the information can be assessed for relevance to the person’s role. Advice may be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

If an individual fails to do this it will be addressed immediately by the responsible person and advice may be

sought.

15. Learning and Development

Safeguarding training is mandatory. Requirements will vary according to the role and responsibility.

Basic and Foundation safeguarding training , where required, must be completed during the probationary period.

All those involved in recruitment, appointment and supervision of roles must undertake Safer recruitment training.

16. Record Keeping

A record of pre-employment checks must be made for all successful applicants

The information recorded for each individual must include (where relevant):

• Role Details

• Personal details (name, address, date of birth)

• Proof of identity checks performed

• Evidence of qualifications

• The following details if DBS required

* o Date of issue of disclosure certificate
* o Name of the subject
* o Level of disclosure requested
* o Position for which disclosure requested
* o Unique references number of the disclosure
* o Details of recruitment decision taken

• Checks carried out on individuals who have lived worked or volunteered outside the UK

• If employed the checks carried out to establish individual’s right to work in the UK

• Details of written references requested, obtained and verified by telephone

• Details of any gaps in employment, education or volunteering history  checked

• if relevant, details of registration with appropriate professional body

• If relevant, record of DBS Risk Assessment

• Record of interview questions and answers

The record must include whether or not each pre-employment check has been carried out, date on which each check was completed, the evidence obtained and who carried out the check.

Records should be signed and dated by the responsible person.

Other records must also be kept

• Where relevant, annually reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures signed off at the appropriate level

• DBS rechecks

• Safeguarding training record

• Incident and concern recording

 Safer Recruitment Policy and Guidance. May 2022.