

Policy and Procedure for Safer Recruitment

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 As part of its commitment to ensuring that children, young people and adults are kept safe from harm, the Catholic Church in England and Wales will apply robust selection and appointment processes to anybody who is applying to work or minister within the Church in a role which gives them direct access to children or adults.
- 1.2 Reliance on a practice of untested trust is insufficient and we aim to adhere to the highest standards of practice and public accountability, while continuing to foster a spirit of trust and openness that reflects the values of the Church.

2 Recruitment, selection and appointment procedure for clergy, religious, employees and volunteers

2.1 Pre-recruitment preparation

- 2.1.1 The case for the new appointment, the position of the appointment within existing structures and where appropriate, provision of supervision and management of the role should be clarified.
- 2.1.2 The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should be consulted about recruitment to the post to determine whether an Enhanced DBS Disclosure/Barred list check will be required, and to ensure that other safeguarding considerations are taken into account at an early stage.
- 2.1.3 Job/role description and person specification
A job or role description¹ and person specification for the role must be developed and formal and detailed job descriptions drawn up for paid appointments by the employing body.
- 2.1.4 The job or role description should include:
 - A detailed description of the work that reflects the specific nature of the role and the specific aspect of the role that justifies the requirement for a DBS Disclosure (where appropriate);

¹ Job descriptions should be reviewed annually or at an agreed interval to ensure that they continue to reflect the work being undertaken

- A list of responsibilities, including the responsibility to become familiar with the National Safeguarding Policies and Procedures;
- The duty to promote safe practice, minimise all risks of abuse and take action to report concerns and/or allegations.

2.1.5 Application or 'personal details form'

An application or personal details form must be completed by all those seeking to work with children and adults at risk. The standard mandatory form for volunteers and sample application forms and reference requests are contained within the Forms Library². However, to ensure that application forms are compliant with employment law and other relevant legislation, advice should be sought from diocesan or congregational HR departments.

2.1.6 The application or personal details form should also:

- State whether or not the role will require a DBS Disclosure and if so, when sending out the application form, include the **Policy Statement on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders** which is located in the national safeguarding procedures manual or signpost the applicant to it;
- Request the names and contact details of a minimum of two referees (including the current employer for paid positions) and ask whether references can be taken up before interview;
- State that identity will be verified and whether this is to be done at interview, following an offer of appointment or, for eligible roles, as part of the DBS application process;
- State that where required for certain positions, there will be a requirement to disclose and discuss relevant convictions at interview or another agreed time after interview. The applicant should not be required to disclose relevant convictions in advance of being offered an interview or formal discussion to assess their suitability for the role;
- State that the National Database will be checked in respect of all applicants before any offer of appointment is confirmed.

2.2 Advertising or making the vacancy or position known

² The standard forms and form templates contained in this Chapter can only be amended to allow for Diocesan or Religious Congregation logos. If you wish to consider amending the content or structure of any of the documents, you must seek approval from CSAS (as the Registered Body) prior to use.

- 2.2.1 Advertise the post or make the position known, noting where required for certain roles, the requirement for a DBS check
- 2.2.2 If someone comes forward independently and offers unsolicited services, the requirement for the following safeguarding checks must be made known as soon as possible
- Verification of Identity - see also DBS Information Sheet – Identity Verification);
 - Safeguarding Self Declaration (SSD) where the role is eligible – see also Policy Statement on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders;
 - DBS Disclosure, where the role is eligible;
 - Uptake of satisfactory references;
 - Eligibility to Work in UK (see [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk));
 - Required health checks.

2.3 **Shortlist and interview or formal discussion regarding role and suitability**

- 2.3.1 Select suitable applicants for interview or discussion and for those short-listed, send a safeguarding self-declaration form for completion and advise that the completed form should be brought to interview.
- 2.3.2 For paid posts, a formal interview must be conducted and for unpaid posts, the prospective volunteer must participate in a formal discussion.
- 2.3.3 Both formal interviews and formal discussions should be used to assess the candidate's suitability including experience and skills for the role as well as motivation and attitude.
- 2.3.4 The interview or formal discussion should also be used to inform the applicant about the requirements of the role, expectations, time-commitment, training and support provisions.
- 2.3.5 For paid positions, the completed Safeguarding Self-Disclosure (SSD) form should be discussed at the end of the formal interview process or at another agreed time after the interview. This process ensures that the applicant has the opportunity to provide context and explanation in respect of any relevant convictions.
- 2.3.6 The discussion about relevant convictions is to be fully documented on the Safeguarding Self-disclosure form (SSD) which is used by the applicant to disclose relevant offences.

- 2.3.7 For volunteers, relevant convictions do not need to be disclosed in advance or during the formal discussion about the role. The completed Safeguarding Self-Disclosure (SSD) is to be sent to the safeguarding office for processing with the DBS application. Relevant convictions will be discussed with the volunteer applicant before a decision about appointment is made.
- 2.3.8 If identity verification is to take place at interview, applicants should be asked to bring original documentary evidence of identity to the interview in addition to completing the **Catholic Church Identity Verification Form**. Alternatively, arrangements can be made to verify identity after an offer of appointment is made.

2.4 Employment checks

2.4.1 Uptake of satisfactory references

Templates are available in the forms library.

2.4.2 For all posts, references from relatives or the current Parish Priest or Deacon are not acceptable. All references should be sought directly from the referee; generic references or those addressed "To whom it may concern" are not acceptable. Those appointing are responsible for satisfying themselves that references are authentic. Negative or ambiguous statements in references must be followed up by the appointer e.g. Parish Priest, Diocesan/Congregational HR or Care Home Manager, and recorded.

2.4.3 In the event that any safeguarding concerns arise on receipt of a reference, advice can be sought from the Safeguarding Co-ordinator in the diocesan safeguarding office, religious commission or CSAS.

2.4.4 DBS Disclosure

For eligible roles, the DBS Disclosure process is only undertaken once a provisional job/role offer has been made.

2.4.5 When an existing office holder, employee or volunteer transfers into a position eligible for a DBS Disclosure, or a position that requires a different level of check, they will then be asked to undertake the Disclosure application process.

2.4.6 If the individual indicates they have an existing DBS Disclosure Certificate and have subscribed to the Online Update Service, any check made must

be in accordance with the requirements of the DBS - see **Information Sheet – Online update service**.

- 2.4.7 The CSAS National Database will be checked before any new application is made to the DBS to determine whether an existing suitable check has already been made and whether relevant risk information is available.
- 2.4.8 If the individual needs a new DBS Disclosure the counter-signatory in the diocesan safeguarding office or the safeguarding representative can advise on eligibility and the level of check required. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Safeguarding Representative will initiate the application process, dependent upon role of appointee. The application process will include ID verification and self-disclosure of relevant offences. The details of the application will be added to the National Database
- 2.4.9 **Identity verification**
Clergy, Religious, lay persons, employees and volunteers are all required to evidence their identity as part of the DBS Disclosure process.
- 2.4.10 For roles that are not eligible for DBS Disclosure, the appointing person should verify the identity of the applicant in line with the documents accepted by the DBS (see DBS Information Sheet – Identity Verification).
- 2.4.11 **Safeguarding Self Declaration (SSD)**
Anyone who is seeking to work with children or adults whether in a paid or unpaid capacity must be provided with the opportunity to self-disclose relevant conviction information. This is a DBS Code of Practice requirement and applies to anyone being asked to have an Enhanced Disclosure.
- 2.4.12 For Clergy, Religious and volunteers and as part of the DBS application process, the completed **Safeguarding Self Declaration (SSD)** should be handed to the Safeguarding Representative or relevant person in a sealed envelope for confidentiality purposes and sent to the Safeguarding Office for processing.
- 2.4.13 The front page of the SSD clearly indicates how any information will be handled and how long the completed form will be retained for. This form also indicates that details of the DBS Disclosure will be retained on the National DBS Database.
- 2.4.14 Please note that in circumstances where the completed SSD is submitted to the Safeguarding Office in advance of the completed DBS application, the

Counter-signatory has the discretion to determine the maximum validity of the completed SSD subject to a minimum period of 3 months.

2.4.15 For paid positions, applicants will be required to bring the completed SSD if invited for interview and as part of the process any relevant convictions will be discussed. Applicants should also be informed that the National Database will be checked in respect of all short-listed applicants.

2.4.16 Right to work in the UK

The appointing organisation/employer must satisfy itself that the paid or voluntary appointee is legally entitled to work in the UK. Please refer to the **“Summary Guide for Employers on Preventing Illegal Working in the UK”** available from the UK Visas and Immigration website.

2.4.17 Required Health Checks

Refer to your HR department for advice as to whether relevant health checks are required.

2.5 Appointment

2.5.1 Appointments should not be confirmed until a satisfactory DBS Disclosure has been received. Following appointment, the use of Disclosures must not be viewed as the final step in the process and should not replace the need for on-going vigilance, careful supervision and sound management.

2.5.2 Employees and volunteers should sign a document to indicate that they have received and understood the job/role description and agree to adhere to the national safeguarding policies and procedures. This should be retained by the Safeguarding Representative or employer. A sample document can be found in **Forms Library**.