

HEREFORD DIOCESE PARISH SAFER RECRUITMENT

What is Safer Recruitment?

Safer recruitment practice is an essential part of the Church of England's approach to safeguarding. It sets out safer recruitment practices for people working or volunteering in a Church of England setting. To ensure only the most suitable people are recruited to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, churches should follow the Steps to Safer Recruitment.

Safer recruitment refers to the whole recruitment process including application forms, confidential declarations, role descriptions, taking references, interviews and criminal record checks. It sets out your roles and responsibilities when recruiting people into certain roles. These steps are discussed below.

Who does it apply to?

Safer Recruitment will only apply to volunteer / paid roles that involve work with children, young people and vulnerable adults across all aspects of the church. Parishes do not need to worry about roles that are taken up by Clergy, Readers and PTO's (Permission to officiate). These are solely recruited by Bishop's office and will not apply to your recruitment process. Your main focus will be about volunteer roles and how Safer Recruitment affects you and the process detailed later on in this document. If you have any concerns regarding Clergy, Readers or PTO's and their recruitment status, please check with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Recruitment and trustee eligibility declaration process for PCC Members

Anybody serving on the PCC (Parochial Church Council) must be re-elected back into that position on a yearly basis. All elected members must also fill out and sign a **PCC Member Trustee Eligibility Declaration Form**. This can be found and downloaded from the Hereford Diocese Safer Recruitment web pages.

Signed Declarations should be kept by the PCC Secretary (or any other nominated officer). PCCs then have to submit an annual return of elected parish officers to the Diocesan Offices.

Who does it apply to?

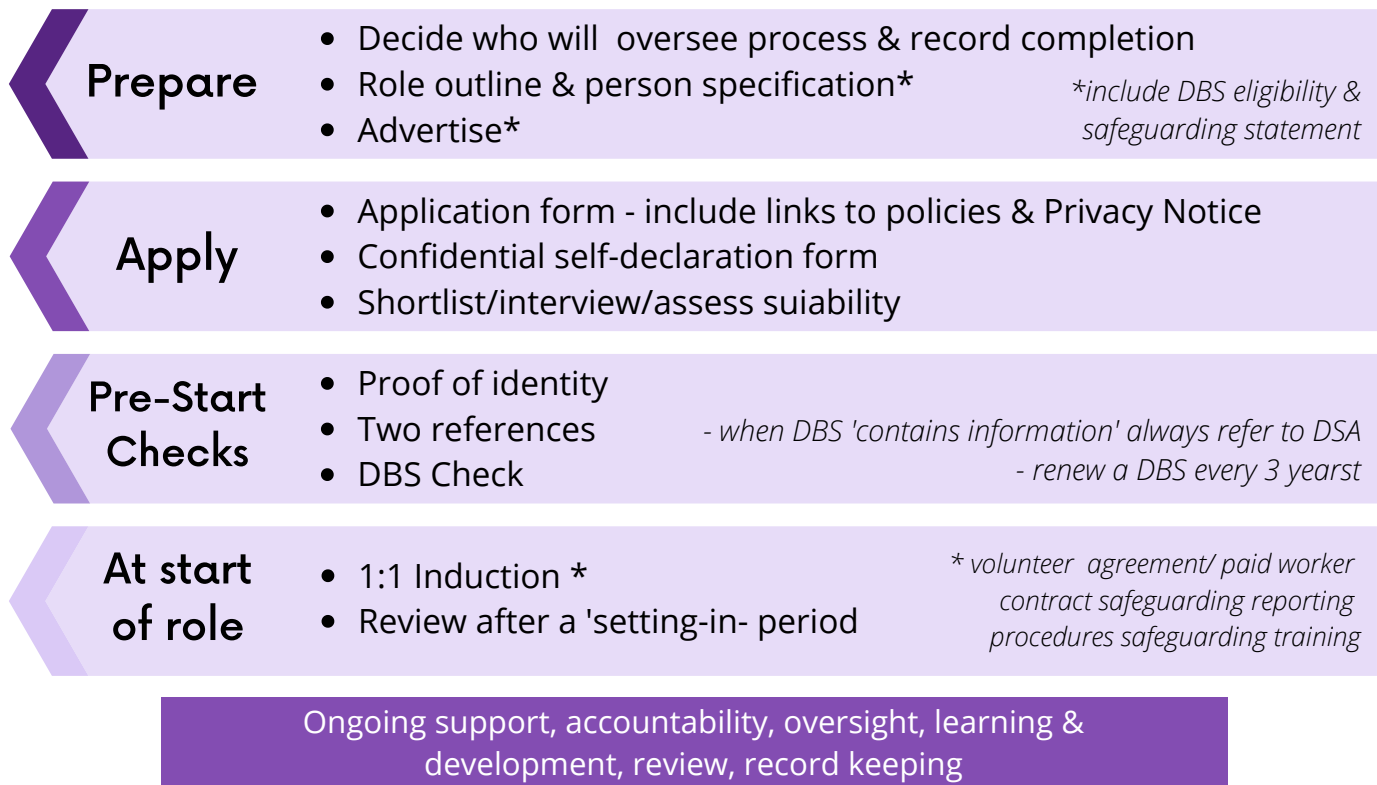
The Hereford Diocese is the place that you can find all the information that you need. If you go to the Hereford Diocese Website (<https://www.hereford.anglican.org/>) and then Safeguarding at the top and then the Safer Recruitment Link found on the left-hand side. You will find more details about Safer Recruitment and lots of downloadable content which includes:

- Safer Recruitment Checklist,
- Example templates of Role Descriptions and Person Specifications. You can add and remove things to match the role you are recruiting for,
- Application Form Template,

- Confidential Self Declaration Form template,
- Information about DBS
- Access to downloadable policies such as Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Whistleblowing Policy etc.

So, what does the Safer Recruitment Policy include?

It will include a set number of stages that you will go through in more detail later on in this document. In its simplest form it follows the below when you are advertising and recruiting for certain roles:



What do we have to do?

There are 16 sections to the safer recruitment process. Below we will go through each stage in more detail. You can click below to go to a certain page.

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Section 1 – Requirements

A responsible person from the Benefice / Parish must be identified for each role being recruited for. This person is accountable for the recruitment and appointment into that role and this person must have also been safely recruited.

The responsible person must be familiar with the requirements of safer recruitment and be up to date on their current safeguarding training. This person can be a PCC Member or someone appointed by the PCC. The PCC are responsible for this.

Section 2 - Role Descriptions and Person Specifications

All roles that fall within safer recruitment must have a written role description and person specification (examples of Volunteer Roles can be found on the Diocesan Safer Recruitment Website Page). This helps the Benefice / Parish to think through what they want from a role, whether paid or voluntary, and what sort of person would be suitable.

You must ensure that any safeguarding needs are clear and refer to the Churches commitment to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults. This gives people confidence that the church takes this very seriously.

Examples of points to consider for when looking at a role, role descriptions and person specifications can be found on the Diocesan website. You will also be able to find examples of job descriptions. You are welcome to take one of our example role descriptions and adapt it for your purposes.

Section 3 - Advertising a Role

All advertisements/notices for roles that fall within the scope of this guidance must include the following details, or clearly indicate where they can be found (e.g. Church body's noticeboard or website):

- A statement which confirms the Church is fully committed 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, including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check.

It is important to note that the level of advertising must be proportionate to the role. For example, adverts for paid staff might be placed in local (possibly national) media and social media, adverts for volunteers are more likely to utilise free services, such as newsletters, word of mouth or noticeboards.

Section 4 - Application Process

When someone applies for a post that is covered by safer recruitment they must be given 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
 - Safer Recruitment Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy¹
- The role description and person specification
- The selection procedure for the post
- A privacy notice detailing how the applicant's personal data will be processed during the recruitment process.

A standardised application must be used. CV's must not be accepted on their own.

The application form should include important information about a candidate's history, including his/her experience of working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults and his/her motivation for working with these groups. Only information that is actually needed to assess the applicant's suitability at this stage should be requested.

Whilst some applicants might find it hard to remember full histories, whether life, employment or volunteering, any gaps must still be identified and explored as far as possible.

It is good practice to include a declaration on the application form that all information provided on the application form is **"true & complete"**.

Section 5 - Confidential Declarations

A Church of England Confidential Declaration form must be completed by all applicants for positions engaging in regulated activity or otherwise working/having substantial contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults which requires an enhanced (with/without barred list) DBS check.

If an applicant does not want to complete a Confidential Declaration form then the application process must be terminated and proceed no further. If you have any questions please contact the safeguarding team for advice.

The Confidential Declaration is served at this time due to possibly saving possible complications in the future. For example, if you only request confidential declaration forms to be completed by shortlisted candidates, you may have a situation where a candidate is applying for a regulated activity role but they are barred from that activity by the DBS. If you don't ask the candidate to complete the confidential declaration form until after they are shortlisted for interview, you would not know that they were barred until the interview.

Section 6 - Shortlisting Applicants

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

Applicants are shortlisted on the evidence in the application form and normally those who meet the person specification are shortlisted. Make sure you check for gaps within the evidence. If they are found make sure you fully investigate.

Interview candidates should receive the following:

- 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 further selection activities to be undertaken as part of the interview process
- Details of any documentation they must provide e.g. proof of qualification(s), proof of identity in accordance with Right to Work in the UK requirements (employees).

This information can be provided via email, post or in person, depending on the nature of the role being interviewed for.

Section 7 - Interviews and Assessment

Always hold interviews face to face, unless this is not possible i.e. Covid-19.

Interviews must be held with a panel of at least two, one of whom must have attended safer recruitment training within the last three years.

An interview gives the opportunity to investigate the individual's motivation for working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults as well as explore his/her past experience of working with the relevant group, which may also reveal any indicators of concern. Remember to investigate any gaps within the evidence provided.

Section 8 - Pre-appointment Checks

Carrying out pre-appointment checks is important for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults as it helps a body to establish a more rounded picture of the candidate's suitability to work with these groups.

Employment/Volunteering/Education References

- Where the individual has been employed/volunteered/studied;
- The dates of employment/volunteering, or duration of study;
- The position held, or study undertaken;
- Individual's suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- Any concerns about the individual working with children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- Any substantiated allegations, disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, in relation to working with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- The reasons for leaving employment, voluntary work, training or study (if known).
- Always follow up written references with a telephone call to confirm that person supplied the reference.
- If you need to obtain a Personnel Reference then further safeguards are put in place. Please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

Section 9 - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

If a DBS check is required for the role, an application at the appropriate level for the role must be made. The level of DBS will be included in the Job Description.

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

DBS certificates obtained in previous or other employment/volunteer positions must not be used unless the applicant is registered with the 'DBS Update Service' and the workforce and level of check detailed on his/her most recent DBS certificate meets the requirements for the role for which he/she is being recruited into. The Job Description will include the level of DBS required.

Section 10 - Criminal Records

Having a criminal record does not necessarily prevent an individual working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults - this will depend on the exact nature of the position applied for and the details and circumstances of his/her offence(s).

Criminal record information does, however, need to be considered in a fair, effective and robust manner, focusing on the need to safeguard people and, where necessary it needs to exclude people with specific criminal convictions. If you have any concerns please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Section 11 - Appointment

All appointments to posts that fall within the scope of Safer Recruitment must be subject to the completion of satisfactory pre-appointment checks.

A start date must only be confirmed once all pre-appointment checks and actions are satisfactorily completed and verified

- 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 and responsibilities of those within the Church body with designated safeguarding responsibilities
 - Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected
 - Other relevant procedures/documentation e.g. whistleblowing, disciplinary procedures, privacy notice relevant to appointment.

All those recruited must sign to say that they have received, understood and agree to adhere to all the relevant written policies as well as the job description role they have recruited for.

Section 12 - Induction

The person recruited must undergo an induction process appropriate to their role.

Induction must include:

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

Section 13 - Probationary/Settling in Period

For **volunteers**, some sort of 'probation' period is equally as important and might be better referred to as a 'settling in' or 'trial' period.

The period should be long enough for the responsible person to provide the necessary support and guidance to enable individuals to reach the required standard by the end of that period. It will include their attitude and approach to safeguarding. Generally, the period set will be a minimum of three months up to six months.

For **volunteers**, there is no employment contract and therefore they do not have the same rights as employees. If the settling-in period reveals that the volunteer is not suited to a particular role, or there are any emerging safeguarding concerns, the volunteer can be asked to leave and stand down at any point.

Section 14 - Ongoing Support, Accountability, Oversight and Supervision

Regular meetings must continue to be scheduled between the responsible person (or someone to whom this task has been delegated) and the individual and safeguarding must form a core part of these ongoing meetings.

Any safeguarding concerns must be thoroughly discussed and documented. These opportunities must also be used to develop the individual's safeguarding understanding and skills.

Section 15 - Learning and Development

Safeguarding learning is essential for roles involving contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults, equipping individuals to have the confidence, knowledge and skills they need in order to care for and support people who are vulnerable, and to recognise and respond to safeguarding issues, including neglect and abuse.

Basic and Foundation (where required) safeguarding training must be completed during the probation period. If they are recruited into a role where contact is with children, young people and vulnerable adults then relevant further safeguarding training will be required.

Section 16 - Record Keeping

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

- Role details
- Personal details of the individual – e.g. name, address, date of birth
- Proof of identity checks performed
- Evidence of qualifications
- Details of the written references requested, obtained and verified by telephone
- Details of the gaps in employment/education/volunteering history checked
- Record of interview questions and answers.

All information in relation to DBS will be recorded by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.