

SAFER RECRUITMENT & PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

CoE Online Safeguarding Training - Notes

Aims:

This course specifically aims to equip participants with an understanding of both safer recruitment and people management, and the role these play in building a safer church community.

Outcomes:

On completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Reflect theologically on people recruitment and safer people management.
- Understand the recruitment process, its intersection with relevant legislation, and how each stage contributes to safer people management.
- Understand good people management practice to be implemented once a person is in post/role.
- Be able to contribute to the development and implementation of a people management plan that reduces risks.

A Christian Perspective "Stewardship"

Moral, Practical and Spiritual responsibilities towards God and others

Cultivating transparency, wisdom and discernment

"PEOPLE AND PROCESS"

Generating insight for ongoing support and supervision

Why 'Safer Recruitment'?

- **Some people** will specifically seek out employment to access vulnerable people and commit acts of abuse;
- **Some people's** behaviours and attitudes are such that they are not suited to working with children, young people or families;
- **Some people's** abusive intentions are difficult to detect;
- **'Safer Recruitment'** makes it more difficult for such people to secure positions which allow them access to vulnerable groups.

The focus on safer recruitment intensified following the Bichard Report (2004) after the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Soham, Cambridgeshire, England.

*"..the harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped. **Our task is to make it as difficult as possible for them to succeed.**"*

The Church of England's commitment

'Promoting a Safer Church' outlines the Church's commitment to promoting a safe environment and culture across all Church communities.

"The danger is that too much reliance will be placed on CRB [DBS] checks..... There is a concern that many abusers do not have convictions and that no intelligence is held about them. Therefore, the selection and recruitment process if properly conducted, is an important, indeed essential, safeguard".

(The Bichard Inquiry Report, 2004)

The Safer Recruitment and People Management policy and guidance informs this training course:

Attracting the best possible individuals.

Deterring individuals who are unsuitable from applying.

Identifying and rejecting individuals who are unsuitable.

Identifying and addressing any concerns post-appointment.

STEP 1: Responsibilities

Identifying who is responsible is important to ensure quality and consistency across the whole process

THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON:

- Plans and oversees the whole process.
- Involves others where appropriate.
- Ensures all involved have completed this course.
- Always seek guidance if you are unsure about who this person is.

INVOLVING OTHERS

- developing a role description;
- being a member of the interview panel;
- creating a video to be shown to prospective candidates;
- helping to devise interview questions;

- being involved in the induction process.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- A conflict of interest arises when there is a conflict between a public duty and a private or personal interest.
- Any potential conflict of interest should be identified, discussed and steps put in place to manage the conflict.

STEP 2: Role Description and Person Specification

Having clearly written documents enables a Church body to think through what they want from a role, whether paid or voluntary, and what sort of person would be suitable.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

- Task/role description
- Person specification
- Responsibilities regarding safeguarding

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Provides accuracy, transparency and clear expectations
- Gives you the chance to put safeguarding principles into practice

STEP 3: Advertising the role

Advertisements/notices provide the first impression of a Church setting.....and should also clearly outline the pre-appointment checks that are required for the role.

THE PERSONAL APPROACH

- Recruitment often targets those who are already known to, or members of, the church or organisation
- Informality can make Church settings particularly vulnerable
- Don't confuse informality with a 'casual' approach to safer recruitment

STEP 4 : Application Form

You should make sure application forms are appropriate and sufficient to assess a candidate's suitability for a role.

APPLICATION FORMS AND SAFEGUARDING

- Re-inforces the value and seriousness placed on the work
- Clear signal that the Church body is vigilant with regards to safeguarding
- Should help understand the candidate's work experience and motivation

ON RECEIVING COMPLETED APPLICATIONS

- Scrutinise in a systematic way prior to shortlisting and invitation to interview
- Flag up issues of suitability
- Identify follow up questions for interview

STEP 5: Confidential Declaration

In the UK, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) allows certain convictions and cautions to be considered 'spent' (i.e. legally ignored) after a specific period of time.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SAFER RECRUITMENT?

- Applicants normally have the right to legally withhold criminal records information.
- Some roles are exempt under the ROA Exceptions Order (1975) including those which have substantial contact with vulnerable groups.
- If the role is exempt, the individual will be eligible for a 'criminal record check'.

CONFIDENTIAL DECLARATION FORM

- Information is provided voluntarily by the applicant in a way that encourage openness, honesty and trust.
- Used only to inform the overall assessment as to a candidate's suitability for the role.
- If an applicant does not wish to complete his/her Confidential Declaration the application must not proceed further and must be terminated.

STEP 6: Shortlisting Applicants

The purpose of shortlisting is to identify, from their application form, those individuals who best meet the selection criteria for the role and who you wish to take forward to the next stage.

HOW TO SHORTLIST

- Compare the information on the application form against the role description and person specification.
- The 'person responsible' as identified in Step 1 should lead this process.
- For paid employment roles it is good practice to make a record of shortlisting decisions.

STEP 7: Interviews and Assessment

- A good interview process gains as full a picture as possible of an applicant, in order to make an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification and the job description.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Interaction with children, young people or vulnerable adults could be included in the interview process.
- This can provide additional observations about what an individual may be like in practice.
- eg. facilitating a small group session with young people or visiting a community project that serves the elderly.

ALL SHORTLISTED PEOPLE SHOULD BE INTERVIEWED

- Skills, abilities and motivation.
- Experience with the particular group.
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships.
- Emotional resilience.
- Attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.
- Reasons for moving on from previous work.
- Awareness of the importance of safeguarding policies and practice.
- Always ask if applicants know of any issues that may affect their ability to carry out the role

STEP 8: Pre-Appointment Checks

- Carrying out pre-appointment checks helps to establish a fuller picture of the candidate's suitability for the role.

HANDLING DISCREPANCIES

- Applicant should be given the opportunity to explain.
- Always keep a written record of any clarifications made.

REFERENCES

- Direct from the organisation and on headed paper.
- If via email - from a verified business email address.
- Follow up references verbally if previous employer reference is unclear

STEP 9: DBS Checking (UK)

- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is the government agency that provides information about an individual's criminal record history in the form of a DBS certificate.

THE DBS CHECK

- DBS LEVELS: Basic, Standard, Enhanced, Enhanced with Barred list(s)
- The DBS certificate identifies:
- Any criminal convictions.
- If they are 'barred'.
- Any other relevant information held by the police.

CARRYING OUT THE CHECK

- Applicant provides ID documents to your local administrator
- DBS runs relevant checks and notifies your local administrator of the outcome.
- Your Church body has a legal responsibility to ensure that the role is eligible for an Enhanced OR Enhanced with barred List(s) DBS check.

STEP 10: Criminal Records

- Criminal record information may come to light at any stage of the safer recruitment process, as well as during the ongoing employment or volunteering relationship.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SAFER RECRUITMENT

- A criminal record does not necessarily prevent an individual working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Criminal records need to be considered in a fair, effective and robust manner, focusing on the need to safeguard people.

LOCAL CHURCH POLICY REQUIREMENTS (UK)

- The Church setting must have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders in place.
- Ensures that both the Church setting and the applicant are aware of the rights and responsibilities on both sides.

STEP 11: Appointment

- When the person responsible for the role (see Step 1) is satisfied that all of the pre appointment checks have been completed and given their final sign off on the file, a start date can be arranged.
- It is good practice to send a letter of appointment, along with the contract (employees) or volunteer agreement (volunteers).

STEP 12: Induction

- A planned, proportionate and consistent induction process ensures that everyone in the church setting fully understands and knows how to follow policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding.

INDUCTION SHOULD ACHIEVE:

- Providing relevant safeguarding training in line with the role, regardless of previous experience.
- Setting clear expectations of acceptable behaviour and the boundaries of their role.
- Ensuring staff have all other relevant training they require to be safe and effective in their role.

STEP 13: Probation / Settling in period

- The probation period is a key part of the recruitment and selection process, and is, in many senses, the only real test as to whether someone is suitable for the role.

HOW LONG SHOULD THIS PERIOD BE?

- Long enough for the responsible person to provide the necessary support and guidance.
- Long enough to make a proper assessment of the individual's conduct and approach to safeguarding.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN?

- Regular meetings between the responsible person and the individual.
- These meetings should focus on assessment, support and guidance of the individual.

STEP 14: Ongoing support, accountability and supervision

- It is good practice to ensure one-to-one supervision and support is in place and to conduct a review regularly as the role requires.

WHAT IS SUPERVISION?

- "A joint endeavour towards reflecting on, learning from and building upon a supervisee's individual character, skills and professional conduct."

HOW SHOULD SUPERVISION BE DONE?

- **Carried out regularly.**
- **Followed up thoroughly.**
- **Collaborative;**
- **Built upon a trusting working relationship.**

- **An opportunity to discuss and understand safeguarding practice.**
- **Mindful of the wider organisational context.**

STEP 15: Safeguarding Learning and Development

- An individual's safeguarding competency is an ongoing development – it is not simply learning a set of actions and using checklists.
- Comprehensive training packages help to encourage a robust safeguarding culture and should reflect the national requirements for ensuring healthy safeguarding practices and responding well when issues arise.

STEP 16: Record Keeping

- It is important that any church setting can reassure itself, as well as others, that all appropriate checks and processes have been undertaken and are kept up to date.