Parish of St Mary's Summerstown

Safer recruitment practice guidance

Approved by PCC on 28th September 21. To be reviewed annually
Latest review: *24th February 2026*

1. Safer Recruiting in the parish: executive summary and models of good practice

1.1. The following document summarises the steps to safer recruiting for parishes and PCCs and contains models of good practice to support safer recruiting in the Church of England.

1.2. An executive summary is provided here to make the link between the models of good practice and the main guidance.

1.3. Finding and recruiting the right people to work with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect can be difficult. What follows is a safer recruitment checklist to help make sure that Dioceses and parishes recruit/appoint appropriate people as employees or volunteers. It is a criminal offence for an individual who is barred from working with vulnerable people (children and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect) to apply for a regulated activity role and it is a criminal offence for an organisation to appoint a barred person to a regulated activity role. A DBS check is the end of the process when the appointer/appointing body is minded to appoint. A DBS check is not the start of the process and should not be the only check of suitability.

2. The steps to Safer Recruiting: an executive summary

1.	**Be clear about who is responsible for appointments.** In local churches this rests with the PCC. Responsibility can be delegated but the person must have been safely recruited him/herself, be capable and competent in recruitment and able to keep personal matters confidential.
2.	**Have a policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders.** Applicants must be clear about how they will be treated if they are ex-offenders. The DBS has published a sample policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders.
3.	**Ensure that there are safeguarding policies in place.** The parish must have adopted the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies.
4.	**Have a clear job description or role which sets out what tasks the applicant will do.** A model template is shown in *A Safe Church*, Section 10, Appendix 14.
5.	**Application form/references.** A model template application form can be found in *A Safe Church*, Section 10, Appendix 15. Always ask for and take up references. Ask referees specifically about an individual's suitability to work with vulnerable people. Ensure that you carefully examine application forms and references and make sure that the information that has been provided is consistent and the organisation has a satisfactory explanation from the applicant in relation to any discrepancies and any gaps in the applicant's personal history and/or career. A model template reference request letter can be found in *A Safe Church*, Section 10, Appendix 17.
6.	**The Confidential Declaration.** Ask if there is any reason why an applicant should not be working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is there to give advice and must be contacted if an applicant discloses any information in his/her Confidential Declaration. A Confidential Declaration form can be found in *A Safe Church*, Section 10, Appendix 20.

cont...

7.	**Interview/discussion.** Have a face-to-face interview or discussion with pre-planned and clear questions to assess a person's suitability for a role. Check the Confidential Declaration and the references. A model interview/discussion template can be found in *A Safe Church*, Section 10, Appendix 16. Questions must assess the values, motives, behaviours and attitudes of those applying for roles which work with vulnerable groups. If the person/chair of the interview panel conducting the interview/discussion is minded to recommend approval then the applicant must be asked to complete an appropriate criminal record check (for example, an enhanced criminal record check, if eligible). Special arrangements apply to overseas applicants. An enhanced criminal record check must always be required in relation to people sent abroad to work with vulnerable people (children or adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect) as part of the UK recruitment process.
8.	**Approval.** The decision to appoint to voluntary or paid work must be made by those who have the responsibility for appointments. A model letter of appointment template can be found in *A Safe Church*, Section 10, Appendix 18.
9.	It is good practice to induct a new volunteer, ensure supervision and support is in place and conduct a review regularly as the role requires.