

**SECTION 10****SAFE RECRUITING  
CHOOSING PEOPLE FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN**

This section gives guidelines on what needs to be done in recruiting and appointing workers, paid and volunteer. It is based on “Safe from Harm”, the code of practice issued by the Home Office, as endorsed by the House of Bishops’ Policy Statement on Child Protection in the Dioceses.

The section is for the Incumbent and PCC and all those with responsibilities for appointing paid and volunteer workers with children in the name of the Diocese of Sheffield.

It also has implications for the appointment of people in positions of responsibility with vulnerable adults.

This section should be read in conjunction with Section 11 on the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Appendix C (Forms 1 – 4).

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## **10.1 A Reminder – “Safe from Harm” Guidelines**

“**Safe from Harm**” is a Code of Practice published in 1993 by the Home Office addressed to voluntary organisations in England and Wales. It asks such organisations to safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in their charge by considering the issues raised by each of the following statements of principle and then reviewing their policy and practice in the light of their circumstances. In particular, organisations are asked to:

- 1 Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children**
- 2 Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur**
- 3 Introduce a system whereby children may appeal to an independent person**
- 4 Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers**
- 5 Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles**
- 6 Use supervision as a means of protecting children**
- 7 Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children**
- 8 Obtain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant’s paid work or volunteering with children**
- 9 Explore all applicant’s experience of working, or contact with children in an interview before appointment**
- 10 Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children**
- 11 Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period**
- 12 Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse**
- 13 Train paid staff and volunteers, their line manager or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of the abuse of children**

## **10.2 Introduction**

As Christians we believe we should be able to trust one another. It makes us uneasy if there is a suggestion that we cannot rely on the good name of church

people. Asking people to be screened in their application for work may put some people off. The procedures may feel like an extra burden for over-stretched leaders.

We have to weigh all this against our duty to prevent unsuitable people from working with children – their welfare and needs come first. We know that adults in church can and do abuse their position of trust. A thorough and open way of recruiting and appointing workers may in itself act as a deterrent to potential abusers. Even when everyone is screened we must never become complacent.

This handbook builds on the procedures outlined in Balance 2 and incorporates the changes brought in by the use of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) established in March 2002.

At this point it is useful to remind ourselves of the law:

The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (CJCSA) establishes 2 new offences:

- first, it is illegal to knowingly apply for a post (paid or otherwise) to work with children or vulnerable adults if one is prohibited from doing so by criminal conviction or other disqualifying behaviour
- second, it is an offence to recruit anyone to work with children or vulnerable adults who is a Schedule One offender or otherwise disqualified from such work.

The latter clearly acts as an incentive to recruiters in this field to use the service offered by the CRB. Failure to use the service could render an employer liable to a claim in the civil courts if a child or vulnerable adult was abused by someone about whom it could be shown that the CRB had, at the time of their appointment, evidence of their relevant disqualification.

### **10.3 Equal Opportunities and the Human Rights Act**

Equal opportunities at work are important. The Diocese and diocesan organisations must comply with the law, respect the human rights of employees and volunteers, make effective use of human resources and, wherever possible, adopt and offer an example of good employment practice. An Equal Opportunities policy, which is clear and consistently applied and monitored, plays an important part in achieving these goals.

The law forbids discrimination in employment on grounds of disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, or criminal record where convictions are “spent”. The Human Rights Act addresses discrimination based on sexual orientation, religion or age and should be included in the Equal Opportunities policy as a matter of justice, as well as good practice. Employers are responsible for discrimination by their employees and by agents acting on their behalf. Discrimination may be direct, indirect and/or built into the system or institution (see Section 1.5 for a definition of racism). Note that the appointment of Beneficed Clergy and those holding the Bishop’s Licence or permission to officiate is subject to Canon Law.

When a person is recruited for any post which involves work with children or young people, in whatever capacity, paid or voluntary, it should be made clear that candidates' suitability, and unsuitability, for this work will be assessed. Applicants must be asked to disclose any relevant matters in confidence and must understand that they will only be appointed on receipt of a satisfactory Disclosure from the CRB.

#### **10.4 A quick guide to the appointment process**

The Incumbent and the PCC should follow the principles outlined in "Safe from Harm" – Guidelines 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Prospective appointees should

- be regarded as job applicants, even if they are volunteers
- have a defined role
- complete an application form
- name 2 referees
- complete a self-declaration form
- bring the self declaration form to an appropriate interview
- if offered the post, know that the appointment is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure from the CRB
- be offered the post subject to a probationary period
- have the appointment confirmed in writing by the PCC
- be commissioned in an appropriate service

#### **10.5 The stages in recruitment and appointment**

There are 5 stages in making appointments to posts involving direct contact with children and young people. These mirror the procedures used in business and commerce.

**THE GUIDELINES IN "SAFE FROM HARM" MARK OUT CLEARLY THE STAGES INVOLVED**

**STAGE 1            Guideline 5: Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles**

**Guideline 7: Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children**

Before any appointment is made – whether paid or voluntary – the PCC or appointing group should be clear what exactly the person is being asked to do. It may be useful in the case of say, a youth work post, to consult people who have done the job in the past, young people themselves, and other agencies in the area working with young people and parents. The job must be assessed to see whether it needs a Disclosure from the CRB and if so at Basic or Enhanced level (see Section 11).

The resulting job description should include

- job title

- summary statement of the main purpose of the job
- person to whom the worker is responsible
- people who are responsible to the worker concerned
- main duties of the job
- terms and conditions of the job (paid employees only)

Added to this, it is useful particularly for recruiting paid workers to write a person specification for the kind of person required to do the job. This might include

- qualifications
- experience
- skills

For volunteers' work, we may not have a large number of interested people but it is still important to bear in mind the issues outlined above and to consider the following factors:

- previous experience of working with or looking after children and young people
- willingness to undertake training if they have no experience in a relevant field
- respect for the race, religion, heritage, culture, language, gender and abilities of the children in their care
- reasonable health, mental stability, integrity and flexibility
- no previous convictions relating to child abuse

### **NB Advertising and CRB Disclosure**

If the job needs the person to have a CRB Disclosure, this must be made clear in the advertisement. If you are making the need known around the church by word of mouth, then make sure people know about this requirement as you spread the word. The Code of Practice of the CRB says that people applying for jobs must be told at the advertisement stage that the job requires a Disclosure. Similarly, if someone offers to work with children or vulnerable adults, they need to be told that if selected, the good practice of the church requires them to apply for a Disclosure. See Annex A for an example of an advertisement for a paid worker.

### **Application forms**

Form 1 of Appendix C asks the candidate for the usual personal information and details of any previous experience they have had with children and children's work. It also asks for 2 referees.

If selected for interview, ask them to bring with them a completed self declaration form (Appendix C Form 2) - NB make sure you give them the covering letter as well.

### **STAGE 2            Guideline 8: Obtain at least one reference from a person who has first hand knowledge of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children**

Take up references (Appendix C Form 3) – one of these should ideally be from a person who knows them well in a similar position to the one you are trying to fill. If the person you are going to interview does not normally attend your church, ask the minister or a senior leader at the church they attend for a reference. If they have moved to your church in the past 5 years, ask their previous church for a reference. It is not desirable for members of the candidate's family to be given as referees.

If the applicant has no experience of working with children, their referee should be a reputable person who can comment on their character and relationships with others. Vague or ambiguous replies should be followed up in person or by telephone.

Keep the letters and communications from referees in a secure place.

**STAGE 3                    Guideline 9: Explore all applicant's experience of working, or contact with, children in an interview before appointment**

At least 2 people should interview the candidate and should explore the candidate's experience with, and expectations of, working with children. The questions should be searching if there are things in the application form which are not clear or where there are unexplained gaps. The tone of the interview should be positive and supportive.

Annex B gives more advice about conducting interviews.

**STAGE 4                    Guideline 10: Find out whether an applicant has any convictions for criminal offences against children**

You have decided that you want to appoint the candidate but the appointment cannot be confirmed until you have established whether they have a criminal record in relation to children:

- ask the person for their completed self-declaration form (Appendix C, Form 2). The cover note to that form outlines the legal position: for children's work, all convictions, however old, which relate to children and young people, must be declared. Information about other criminal convictions should also be given, as these may be relevant to the suitability of the person.
- keep the self-declaration with the application form and references in a safe place. You may need to refer to it if the Disclosure from the CRB indicates any cause for concern. In this case the DCPA as a risk assessor may contact you to see if the applicant declared any cautions or convictions which might make them unsuitable to work with children
- ask the potential worker to apply – via the CRB Administrator at Diocesan Church House – for a Disclosure from the CRB (see Section 11)

NB - the CRB Disclosure can only tell you about the person's unsuitability to work with children. Stages 1-3 are crucial in helping you assess their suitability. Both aspects must be explored.

**Do not confirm the appointment until you receive notification of a satisfactory Disclosure from the CRB Administrator. Do not take the word of the applicant that their Disclosure is satisfactory.**

If the Disclosure is satisfactory confirm the appointment and move to stage 5. If the Disclosure indicates some cause for concern refer to Section 11.

**STAGE 5      Guideline 11: Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period**

Having received a satisfactory Disclosure and appointed the person, you should agree an appropriate induction period during which they familiarise themselves with the work and undertake any necessary training. See Guideline 13.

The purpose of the probationary period is

- to be assured that the worker is suitable and not a potential abuser
- to support them so that they can develop in this new work

During this period an experienced leader/supervisor should meet with the new worker regularly and observe them with the children in order to assess suitability and to give feedback and support. In the case of a short term project, like a holiday club, the new worker should work with an experienced leader. On an agreed date, the supervisor and a representative from the PCC (eg the Named Person) should review their performance with the person. The appointment should be confirmed or terminated and the PCC notified.

The appointment should be marked during a service of worship in order to affirm the value of the worker's activity and the support of the congregation. See Annex C for an example of a contract of employment for a paid worker. For a volunteer it is a good idea for the PCC and the worker to sign an Agreement. A sample Agreement is at Annex D.

## **10.6      Support and supervision**

### **GUIDELINE 6:      Use supervision as a means of protecting children**

#### **1      Supervision of paid staff**

The quality of support and supervision can make the difference between a job being just bearable or really fulfilling. The purpose of supervision is to enable the worker to do the best job possible and to feel valued.

- Non-managerial supervision consists of meetings between the worker and a person who is not their line manager. This provides space for the worker to focus more freely on problems in the workplace, their own development and issues which generally affect their work

- Managerial supervision consists of regular meetings between the worker and their line manager, to review how the worker is performing, agree targets for future work and identify the training or resources which may be necessary

There can, of course, be crossover between the two, but the main point is that supervision should meet the employing body's need while demonstrating that the worker is valued.

## 2 Supervision of Volunteers

Because the people who volunteer usually have little extra time, it is more difficult to arrange formal supervision. However, this is not an excuse for no supervision at all. Volunteers should know who their supervisor or support person is.

Supervision of volunteers can be done in several ways

- they can have the opportunity to debrief 1:1 or in the volunteers' group after a session and any particular need can be followed up
- an outside person can drop in on the session to get a feel for any difficulties, problems or achievements

There should be a formal review at least once a year when the volunteer can discuss their work over the past 12 months in a 1:1 talk with their supervisor.

It is important that the volunteer feels they have some stake in supervision, including being able to approach their supervisor if they need some support or guidance. NB - if workers undertake training with Nextgen (see Appendix K) they will have a ready made support network.

### 10.7 Training

**GUIDELINE 13: Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of the abuse of children**

For any member of staff, whether paid or not, continued learning is essential to their development and training can make an important contribution. Good quality training not only contributes to the development of skills to do the job; it is also likely to contribute to personal development. The staff member may well view training as a way of being valued.

When a parish appoints a professionally qualified person to an appropriate role eg, a teacher teaching a Sunday group, it should not be assumed that they do not need training. They may be presented with a situation with which they are unfamiliar professionally eg teaching a child with learning difficulties. It will help both the teacher and the child to discuss how they might develop relevant skills.

All volunteers will bring skills to a greater or lesser degree. It is important that when they are asked to work with children they have basic competencies and as a

minimum every volunteer should complete a Diocesan training course eg Nextgen, youth workers training and a basic First Aid course.

Regular training in child protection in the Diocese includes

- child protection for volunteers, paid workers and Named Persons
- briefings for people responsible for drawing up and implementing Balance policy and practice in the parish, including use of the CRB
- training for Youth and Children's Ministry: Nextgen
- ecumenical Child Protection Courses which are run by qualified trainers for churches in South Yorkshire and the Goole area.

For further information about these courses contact the Diocesan Children's Officer, the Youth Officer or the Ministry Training Team Secretary at Diocesan Church House on 01709 309147

**NB GUIDELINE 12:            Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse**

See the "Good Practice" card and make the relevant sections of this handbook available to leaders and workers.

**Annex A**

**Advertising the job**

There are different ways of advertising. If the job is full time and paid, it may be worth considering advertising nationally, maybe in national newspapers or in interest magazines (though it may be expensive!). For a part time job, more local advertising is appropriate. For a voluntary post in the parish, a mention in the parish magazine or some posters on the notice board might be appropriate. Below is an example of an advertisement

**St Gopak, Forgehouses**

**Diocese of Sheffield**

**Full Time Youth Worker**

(Salary) (according to experience and qualifications)  
(+ pension + expenses)

This exciting new position provides an opportunity for a youth worker with a relevant qualification to work with 11 to 18 year olds, both within the church and on a detached basis in the local community. A committed Christian, you must have good communication and listening skills. An appointment will be for an initial 3 year period.

For an application form and job description please contact

(name .....)  
Telephone .....  
E-mail .....  
Date .....

Note that appointment to this post is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Closing date for completed applications .....

A residential selection weekend will take place on .....

Interviews will take place on .....

**Annex B****Interviewing and selection****Points to Remember:**

- those who do the short listing should also do the interviewing
- always have a panel of mixed gender (unless interviewing for a post like a girls' project)
- if the post involves work with members of the black community, or is likely to attract applications from the black community, the panel should include a black person (see Section 10.3). However, if possible, a multi-racial panel, reflecting our multi-racial community, is preferable for all appointments
- the panel should agree questions in advance and ask each candidate the same ones
- write down, prior to the interview, what the panel is looking for in answer to each question. This will be useful when it comes to assessing the quality of the candidate
- the questions should relate to the job description and person specification
- someone needs to take a brief note of the interview. Reasons for recommending (or not) the selection need to be recorded with reference to the job description and person specification. If anyone is aggrieved, it is useful to be able to refer to the notes and how the decision was reached.
- candidates need to be informed of the result as soon as possible and told that their appointment will only be confirmed after notification by the Diocesan CRB Administrator of a satisfactory Disclosure.

**Annex C****Contracts**

Anybody engaging a person in paid employment is legally required to provide a contract of employment in writing and have it signed by both parties.

A contract of employment must contain the following information

- name of employer
- name of employee
- job title
- starting date of employment
- rate of pay
- hours of work
- pay period and method of payment
- holiday entitlement
- sick pay entitlement
- pension rights
- notice of termination of contract
- disciplinary and grievance procedures
- name of person to whom grievances should be reported
- name of person to whom the employee is responsible

**VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT AND DECLARATION**

**Church** .....

**Worker** .....

**We welcome you as** .....

You are joining a team which, together with the whole church, commits itself to the care and nurture of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

On behalf of the members of this church, we undertake to support you and your work, by prayer, by our interest, and by providing resources and training.

The person who will give you primary support is .....  
They are there to discuss any matters of concern that you may have.

Your responsibilities are: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Once a year we will meet with you to talk about your work and, if you wish to continue, we will discuss your development and training as appropriate.

Working with children and young people is a responsibility, but it also brings great rewards. We hope you will enjoy your work.

Signed: ..... Incumbent

Signed: ..... Church Warden

Date: .....

**Declaration**

*To be completed by the worker*

I understand the nature of the work that I am to undertake and the responsibilities involved.

I have read the church's guidelines for safeguarding children. I understand that it is my duty to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is suspected or disclosed.

Signed: ..... Date: .....