

Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



SAFE RECRUITMENT

Over the years we have been blessed by the huge number of dedicated and talented volunteers and employed people – parents and single people, priests and religious – who have given a tremendous amount to the children, young people and the vulnerable in our parishes. Our churches and parish organisations are helping people every day.

Very few parishes have professionally qualified paid workers. We rely more and more on willing and conscientious volunteers to nurture and lead our young and care for our vulnerable people. We know from hard experience that it's not always easy to find volunteers. When we have people who will readily volunteer and can find the time to do so, we tend to assume they are trustworthy – and the vast majority are. Regrettably, we know that child sex offenders and individuals who wish to have access to children, young people or vulnerable adults for their own purposes will seek to operate in organisations, including church communities, where they believe their behaviour will not be identified.

Sadly, it is simplistic to assume that everyone shares the same high values or has appropriate respect for individuals. We have to recognise, that safeguards we naturally assume and take for granted, need to be deliberately put in place and checked – otherwise we may not be protecting the most easily influenced in our communities as effectively as we think we are. Sadly, even in the best run organisations, it has been known for children, young people or vulnerable adults to be physically, emotionally, sexually or financially abused.

Therefore, conscious of the need for safe recruitment, supervision and support of workers and for developing best practice for direct work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, the following principles are in place.

Any person seeking an appointment to a post that involves contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, must comply fully with the appointment procedures, these are:-

Treat all potential staff/ volunteers as job applicants.

Anyone who is asked or wishes to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, whether full or part time, must as a first step complete a "Standard Application Form", a copy of which is in the parish pack. The application must include:

- A statement of personal details, full name, date of birth and address together with the applicant's signature.
- An original of a formal document that confirms the personal details. For example a passport or driving licence.
- A resumé of previous experience of relevant work, if any.
- Permission to contact in writing or in person, two named referees.
- Details of any convictions, including those "spent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, in the form of a Confidential Declaration. (CDF) The contents of the CDF will only be seen by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer or a person who has a legitimate entitlement.
- A signed agreement to undertake a disclosure enquiry with the Criminal Records Bureau, in the event that the person is to be offered the appointment.

Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Obtain references from people who have knowledge of the person's experience.

In normal practice two written references should be taken up from two adults who know the applicant well. At least one of these references should be from an adult who has experienced the applicant working with children/ young people/ vulnerable adults. The Parish Priest, the Parish Safeguarding Representative or any other person involved in the interviewing and appointing the applicant may not be a referee, nor should they be a member of the group the person is applying to join.

- When requesting references it is important to state explicitly that the job/ role is with children, young people or vulnerable adults and the referee must be asked to comment specifically on the applicant's suitability for such work.
- If anything in the references gives rise to doubts about the applicant's suitability for work with children/ young people/ vulnerable adults, albeit in vague or ambiguous terms, the referee should be contacted to discuss the matter further.

Explore the applicant's experience of working with or contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults in an interview.

All applicants for paid and voluntary work with children/ young people/ vulnerable adults must be interviewed before being appointed. The interview might normally be conducted by the Parish Priest, Group Leader and the Parish Safeguarding Representative. As to the degree of formality of the interview, the interviewers should bear in mind the nature of the post/ role, the level of responsibility it carries, whether the post is paid or not and the maturity and experience of the applicant.

The interviewers should explore and discuss the applicant's previous work experience, if any, with children/ young people/ vulnerable adults, the applicant's understanding of their role in safeguarding practice and their commitment to it. Any responses that give cause for concern must be explored further until there is no doubt as to the applicant's suitability.

Ascertain whether the applicant has any previous convictions for relevant offences.

Applicants should be told clearly and informed by application form that the position whether paid or voluntary is an exception to the normal workings of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Normally offences are "spent", after a period of time; therefore the ex-offender can state lawfully that they have no criminal record. There are many exceptions to this, including those who seek to work and have contact with people who are under 18 years old. In this situation ALL previous convictions must be disclosed voluntarily whether the post is a paid one or a voluntary one via a confidential declaration (CDF). Therefore to work with children, all convictions, bind over orders and cautions must be informed by a Criminal Records Bureau check.

- When the Parish Priest and the Parish Safeguarding Representative wish to appoint a person to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, there must be a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. The following procedure must be followed in all cases:
- See flowchart (fig 2)

Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



- ~ The applicant for the job/ role must fill in the Disclosure Application Form. The Parish Priest or Parish Safeguarding Representative should assist the applicant if that is necessary.
- ~ Relevant and acceptable forms of identity must be produced.
- ~ After the Safeguarding Coordinator or Officer has signed the Disclosure Application Form it will be sent to the CRB.
- ~ The results of the CRB check will be sent direct to both the applicant for the job/ role and the Safeguarding Officer.
- ~ The applicant keeps their copy of the CRB results.
- ~ The Safeguarding Coordinator/ Officer will examine the CRB results and will give the Parish Safeguarding Representative confirmation that the applicant has been cleared for appointment. Similarly if there are any concerns these will be expressed to the Parish Safeguarding Representative and clearance will be denied.
- ~ The Safeguarding Coordinator/ Officer's copy of the CRB result will be recorded onto the CSAS National Database and then destroyed in accordance with CRB guidelines.

Post Appointment

Vigilance does not end with the appointment. Therefore all appointments should be subject to continued monitoring.

Ensure all staff/ volunteers receive training in the risk of abuse.

All those working with children and vulnerable adults must receive appropriate training in awareness and best practice. The diocese undertakes to facilitate appropriate training. The level of training required will vary depending upon the level of responsibility of the role undertaken.

Ensure all staff/ volunteers are aware of the guidelines regarding allegations of abuse.

A summary of the procedures on how to respond to a specific allegation or suspicion of abuse are found in this document. It is essential that all who work with children and vulnerable adults have a sound knowledge of these procedures. This must form part of the ongoing awareness training and supervision of those who are appointed to work with children and vulnerable adults.



Flowchart - Safe Recruitment of Volunteers

