

Policy Statement on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

1. The Diocese, in serving the Catholic community in East Anglia, and as an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure services to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, will comply fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly. The Diocese undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or any other information revealed.
2. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working within the Catholic community. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offence(s).
3. The Diocese is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background; which assist in maintaining a safe environment for everyone who engages in activities based within the Catholic community.
4. This written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made known and is available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
5. The Diocese actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and relevant experience.
6. A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that a Disclosure is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
7. Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. This information is sent under separate, confidential cover to a designated person, generally the person responsible for the appointment process, and this information will ONLY be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will be consulted in cases of doubt.
8. Unless the nature of the role allows questions to be asked about your entire criminal record, only "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 must be disclosed.
9. In order to protect certain vulnerable groups within society there are a large number of roles, posts and professions that are exempted from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. These include posts and volunteer roles involving access to children, young people, the elderly, people with disabilities, alcohol or drug misuses and the chronically sick. In such cases organisations are legally entitled to ask applicants for details of all convictions, irrespective of whether they are "spent" or "unspent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.
10. Suitable training to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences is provided for all those who are involved in the recruitment process. Appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the appointment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, is also provided.
11. At interview, or in a separate discussion, an open and measured discussion must take place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.
12. Every subject of a CRB Disclosure is made aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and a copy is available on request.
13. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed on a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Adapted from CSAS Procedures and approved by East Anglia Diocese Safeguarding Commission

28/4/2011