

Safeguarding Policy Part F: Safer Recruitment & People Management

ST HELEN BISHOPSGATE AND ST PETER-UPON-CORNHILL

Date for review: June 2024

St Helen's is committed to promoting a safer environment and culture within the church for everyone, in particular for children, young people and vulnerable adults. One way in which the Church aims to fulfil its commitment is by following safer recruitment/appointment processes and ensuring continued vigilance once someone is in the role. Safer recruitment goes beyond simply obtaining a DBS Certificate. The reality is that many people who have abused or will abuse in positions of trust do not have a criminal record.

For a more detailed explanation regarding the policy of safer recruitment please review the Church of England *Safer Recruitment and People Management guidance* [here](#).

The requirements in this guidance must be followed for the appointment of all roles within St Helen's that involve substantial contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults as well as trustees and those who supervise people in those roles. This therefore includes employees, associates, youth and children's workers, volunteers within youth and children's ministry (inc. creche helpers, Little Pickles) and PCC members. It would not typically be used for areas of general service within the church e.g. serving at after 8's, PA & projection and other roles that do not involve substantial contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

All the following steps should be carried out as part of the recruitment process even if the person is already 'known' (e.g. as a member of the congregation).

1. Responsible person

The responsible person would typically be the ministry area leader who would then become the applicants line manager or supervisor should they be successful in their application. The responsible person should be selected at the start of the recruitment process. The responsible person should plan and oversee the whole recruitment process whether for employed staff or volunteers. The responsible person must be familiar with the requirements of this guidance and be up to date with safeguarding training. If responsibility is delegated at any stage, the responsible person must ensure that the individual they are delegating to is capable, competent and has received all required training.

2. Role description and person specification

The responsible person should ensure that they have an up-to-date role description and person specification for the role they wish to recruit for. The job description should define the level and nature of contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults so that there is a clear understanding of the individual's safeguarding responsibilities.

3. Advertising the role

If the role involves working with children or vulnerable adults, advertisements for the role must include the following details, or clearly indicate where they can be found:

- The following statement: "St Helen's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this commitment. All appointments to this role are subject to acceptable pre-appointment checks, including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check".
- The essential elements of the person specification required for the role.

4. Application

Application forms should be appropriate and sufficient to assess a candidate's suitability for a role. If the role involves working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults, the application form should include information about a candidate's (i) experience of working or volunteering with these groups and (ii) their motivation for working with these groups.

5. Confidential declarations

The church has a legal responsibility to check whether a role is eligible for Enhanced or Enhanced with barred list/s DBS and must be able to explain which parts of legislation support the application. It is the responsibility of the St Helen's Staffing & Safeguarding Team to check if a DBS check is required for the role applied for.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) allows certain convictions and cautions to be considered 'spent' (ie legally ignored) after a specified period of time. However, some roles fall under an 'ROA Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended', these include those that involve working with children, young people and vulnerable people.

If the role you are appointing to is exempt this means the individual will be eligible for an Enhanced (with/without barred list) DBS check. Applicants for exempt roles must be asked to complete a confidential declaration. This gives the individual the opportunity to disclose details of any convictions, cautions, final warnings and reprimands which are not protected and will be displayed on a DBS certificate. The information declared by the applicant, as well as that provided on the DBS certificate can be considered when deciding on an individual's suitability for the role for which he/she applied.

A candidate should be made aware that information will be used only to inform the overall assessment as to a candidate's suitability for the role, where it is relevant. If an applicant does not wish to complete his/her confidential declaration, the application must not proceed further and must be terminated.

6. Shortlisting applicants

Even if there is only one applicant to be considered, their application still needs to be assessed to ensure it meets the essential selection criteria.

Candidates should be shortlisted by comparing the information provided on their application form against the person specification requirements. It is good practice to record shortlisting decisions.

7. Interviews and assessments

Interviews for all shortlisted candidates for employed roles should be conducted face-to-face. In exceptional circumstances interviews can be carried out online, for example for candidates outside the UK.

A good interview process gains as full a picture as possible of a candidate. It may be that some interaction with the groups with which they will be working is appropriately included in the interview process.

Interviews for voluntary roles may be more informal than an interview for paid employment and should be structured to help decide whether the person is suitable for and has a good understanding of working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

All candidates should be asked if they know of any reason why they should not work in such a role, or if there are any pending issues which may affect their ability to carry out the role.

8. Pre-appointment checks

All appointments to posts that fall within the scope of the safer recruitment & people management policy must be subject to the completion of satisfactory pre-appointment checks and procedures. All pre-appointment checks, including references are essential and should be sought directly from a current employer alongside a personal referee, ideally in a Christian context, when an applicant is applying for a paid role; and a senior church representative, alongside a personal referee, when the position is voluntary (including overseas, where relevant). The responsible person should consider what else can be done to build up as true and rounded a picture of the applicant as possible.

9. DBS checking

It is the responsibility of the St Helen's Staffing & Safeguarding Team to process DBS applications and ensure confidential declarations are completed.

10. Criminal record

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. Having a criminal record does not necessarily prevent an individual working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults – this will depend on the exact nature of the position applied for and the details and circumstances of the offence(s).

Criminal record information needs to be considered in a fair, effective and robust manner, focusing on the need to safeguard people and, where necessary, exclude individuals with particular forms of criminal record. Information disclosed in the confidential declaration and DBS certificate will be considered by the Parish Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

Please consult the *Safeguarding policy supplement B: PCC statement on recruitment of ex-offenders* on the St Helen's safeguarding [page](#).

11. Appointment

Once all the pre-appointment checks have been completed and given their final sign off on the file by the St Helen's Staffing & Safeguarding team, a start date can be confirmed.

An email or letter of appointment should be sent, along with the contract or volunteer agreement which should be sent by the St Helen's Staffing and Safeguarding Team in liaison the responsible person. This should include information about safeguarding.

12. Induction

The induction process, considered as good practice, should achieve the following (i) provide relevant safeguarding training; (ii) set clear expectations of acceptable behaviour and the boundaries of the role; (iii) ensure staff have all other relevant training.

For employees and volunteers, induction is organised by the St Helen's Staffing & Safeguarding team.

13. Probation / settling in period

During the settling in period, there should be regular meetings between the responsible person and the individual. A formal probation period lasts between 3-6 months by which time a review interview should be conducted by the responsible person, with the final decision made by the team leader and feedback should be recorded on the person's file.

For volunteers a settling in period should be observed, with an informal review conducted by the lead recruiter or supervisors to assess how the individual is progressing.

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 as regularly as the role requires, this should be overseen by the team leader.

15. Safeguarding learning and development

An individual's competency in safeguarding is an ongoing process and it is the cumulative responsibility of the safeguarding team, ministry area leader and lead recruiter (for volunteers) to ensure the individual has an up-to-date skill set.

16. Record keeping

Records will be kept for all individuals (employed or volunteer) successfully appointed, whose role falls under the scope of the safer recruitment & people management policy. Records will be kept in secure electronic folders under the responsibility of St Helen's Staffing & Safeguarding team.