

Recruitment of People with Criminal Records Policy

[Chaplaincy]

1. Policy Statement

As a Christian community, [Chaplaincy] believes that all people are created in the image of God and are entitled to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect. We recognise that people can change, grow, and be restored following past mistakes and that individuals with a criminal history may have valuable gifts, skills, and experience to contribute to the life and ministry of the Church.

At the same time, the Church has a fundamental responsibility to protect children, young people, vulnerable adults, and all those entrusted to its care. Safeguarding and the welfare of those at risk are paramount considerations in all recruitment decisions.

This policy seeks to balance the Church's commitment to safeguarding with its commitment to inclusion, rehabilitation, justice, and equal opportunity. It applies to all roles where the Church of England's Safer Recruitment and People Management Policy indicates that a police check is required from any country the person has lived in during the previous ten years.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Clergy and licensed ministers.
- Employees.
- Volunteers.
- Lay ministers and church officers.
- Members of governing bodies where appropriate.
- Anyone applying to undertake a role on behalf of the Church.

3. Principles

The Church is committed to:

- Treating all applicants fairly and consistently.
- Making recruitment decisions based on suitability for the role.
- Creating opportunities for rehabilitation and meaningful participation.
- Maintaining safe environments for all.
- Complying with relevant safeguarding requirements and local laws.
- Respecting confidentiality and privacy.
- Assessing risk on an individual basis rather than applying blanket exclusions.

A criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant from employment, ministry, or volunteering within the Church.

4. Safeguarding Commitment

The Church recognises that certain roles involve positions of trust and responsibility, particularly where they involve:

- Children and young people.
- Vulnerable adults.
- Pastoral care.
- Counselling or spiritual direction.
- Access to confidential information.
- Financial responsibility.
- Leadership or authority.

For these roles, more detailed assessment and safeguarding scrutiny may be required.

5. Criminal Record and Background Checks

Where permitted by local law, criminal record checks, police checks, safeguarding checks, or similar screening processes may be conducted before appointment.

The Church will:

- Inform applicants if a background check is required.
- Explain why the information is needed.
- Obtain any necessary consent.
- Use the information only for legitimate safeguarding and recruitment purposes.

Where formal criminal record checking systems do not exist, the Church may use alternative safeguarding measures, including:

- References.
- Interviews.
- Self-disclosure.
- Risk assessments.
- Verification of previous ministry or employment history.

Where concerns/blemishes are reported or identified on completed checks they are to be referred to the diocesan safeguarding team as soon as possible .

6. Disclosure of Criminal History

Applicants are expected to be honest and open about any criminal history where disclosure is required by law or requested as part of the recruitment process.

Failure to disclose relevant information that is later discovered may result in:

- Withdrawal of an offer.
- Termination of appointment.
- Disciplinary action.
- Restrictions on ministry or volunteering.

Applicants will be given an opportunity to provide context and explanation regarding any disclosed matters.

7. Individual Assessment

Each disclosure will be considered on its individual merits upon receipt by the DST.

The Church will take into account:

Nature of the Offence

- The type and seriousness of the offence.
- Whether violence, abuse, exploitation, dishonesty, or breaches of trust were involved.
- Whether children or vulnerable adults were affected.

Relevance to the Role

- The duties and responsibilities of the position.
- The level of trust required.
- Access to vulnerable individuals or sensitive information.

Time Elapsed

- When the offence occurred.
- The applicant's age at the time.
- Evidence of good conduct since the offence.

Pattern of Behaviour

- Whether the matter was isolated or repeated.
- Evidence of ongoing concerns or recurring behaviour.

Evidence of Rehabilitation

- Acceptance of responsibility.
- Demonstrated behavioural change.
- Positive references and employment history.
- Completion of treatment, support, or rehabilitation programmes where appropriate.

8. Roles Involving Children and Vulnerable Adults

The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.

Certain offences may make an individual unsuitable for roles involving:

- Direct work with children.
- Youth ministry.

- Pastoral work with vulnerable adults.
- Positions involving significant authority or trust.

Particular concern will arise where offences involve but not only.

- Physical abuse.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Exploitation.
- Grooming.
- Neglect.
- Serious violence.
- Human trafficking.
- Abuse of trust.
- Financial abuse

The Church reserves the right to restrict participation in certain ministries or activities where safeguarding risks have been identified.

9. Risk Assessment

Where concerns are identified, a safeguarding risk assessment will be completed by DST.

The assessment may consider:

- The nature of the role.
- Potential risks to others.
- Available supervision arrangements.
- Safeguarding safeguards that can be implemented.
- The views of safeguarding personnel and church leadership.
- Legal obligations within the relevant jurisdiction.

Possible outcomes include:

- Appointment without restriction.
- Appointment with safeguards or supervision.

- Appointment to an alternative role.
- A decision not to appoint.

10. Confidentiality

All criminal record and safeguarding information will be:

- Handled sensitively.
- Treated as confidential.
- Shared only with those who need the information for legitimate safeguarding or recruitment purposes.
- Stored securely and in accordance with applicable privacy and data protection laws.

11. Appeals Applicants who believe they have been unfairly treated may request a review of the decision in accordance with the Diocesan safer recruitment procedures.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect:

- Changes in safeguarding standards.
- Developments in local law.
- New guidance issued by the Church.
- Lessons learned from safeguarding reviews and audits.