



ALL SAINTS CHURCH STEVENAGE MARCH 2024 - NEW

Safer Recruitment Policy (including Recruitment of ex-Offenders)

PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

In accordance with Church of England and Methodist Safeguarding Policies

Declaration of Policy

All Saints Church Stevenage is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults, and the care and nurture of children within our church community. We will carefully select, train and support all those with any responsibility within the church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles.

This means that we:

- Ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent those who might harm children or adults from taking up, in our church, positions of respect, responsibility or authority where they are trusted by others. A copy of All Saints Church Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy is kept in the church office and is displayed on the church safeguarding notice board.
- Adhere to safer recruitment legislation, guidance and standards, responding positively to changing understandings of good safer recruitment practice.
- Ensure that all volunteers working with vulnerable children and adults will have completed the DBS disclosure as required by the Diocese of St Albans and its umbrella organization, thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS) (see www.stalbans.anglican.org/ and www.thirtyoneeight.org)
- Are committed to the fair treatment of its staff, volunteers and users of its services, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- 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 for volunteer posts, including those with criminal records.
- Select all candidates for interview for voluntary roles based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

The recruitment process:

1.1 We adhere to the Church of England House of Bishops Safeguarding Guidance, in particular the chapter 'Safer Recruitment and People Management' (2021) which is found in the Safeguarding e-manual on both the Diocese of St Albans and the Church of England website.

1.2 **The appointment of volunteers is the responsibility of the Churchwardens and JCC.** Responsibility for the recruitment process is delegated but the people to whom it is delegated are capable, competent and trained in safer recruitment and is also able to keep personal matters confidential.

1.3 For a voluntary position at All Saints a verbal description of the role will be given, along with a Welcome Pack which gives guidance to prospective volunteers on navigating the recruitment process. The formal role description also says which criminal records check (DBS, standard or enhanced) is required. It is a criminal offence for an individual who is barred from working with vulnerable groups to apply for a regulated activity and it is a criminal offence for an organization to appoint a barred person to a regulated activity role.

1.4 An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that the applicant is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, the application form will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

1.5 Every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS is made aware of the existence of the DBS code of practice. A copy is in Safeguarding file in office) available on request.

1.6 At the start of the recruitment process, where an individual is going to work or volunteer with vulnerable people, they will be asked to complete a 'Confidential Declaration' which, in broad summary, asks if there is any reason why they should

not be working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect. If any applicant discloses information in the Confidential Declaration, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor must be contacted. Should the applicant not wish to complete the Confidential Declaration, which is entirely their choice, the application does not proceed further and is terminated.

Interview/ discussion

2.1 There a face-to-face interview or discussion with pre-planned and clear questions to assess a person's suitability for a role. The interview will include questions about an applicant's values; if relevant, their attitude to working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and their motives for wanting to engage in such work. Additional questions can be asked for clarification purposes as necessary.

2.2 The applicant is asked if they know of any reason why they should not be working with children or adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, or if there are any pending cases/issues which could affect them or their ability to carry out the role. If the applicant discloses any matter during the interview that relates to children and/or adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and which may affect the applicant's suitability for the role, then this must be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice.

2.3 For volunteering roles the candidate's identity will need to be checked by asking them to bring photographic ID as well as evidence of their relevant qualifications.

2.4 If the interview panel wishes to appoint the applicant the appropriate criminal record check must be carried out. Should the applicant not wish to apply for a criminal record check, which is entirely their choice; the application must not proceed further and must be terminated.

2.5 The decision to appoint to voluntary work must be made only by those who have that responsibility (see paragraph 1.2 above). The start date or appointment must not be confirmed until the relevant criminal record check is received and examined. The criminal record checks are received and examined by the DBS administrator. Criminal record checks that are not clear (i.e. which contain information of, for instance, criminal convictions or cautions or additional information such as arrests) must always be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice

2.6 All voluntary posts will receive a letter of appointment.

Induction

3.1 Volunteers whose roles involve working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect must receive relevant safeguarding training from the Diocese after starting their role, regardless of previous experience. They must also attend regular updates every three years.

Probationary/ settling-in period

4.1 There will be a settling-in period for volunteers when the volunteer and the organization can see whether the volunteer is suited to the particular role. During these periods relevant training will be planned and any necessary support will be arranged. In addition, regular meetings with a member of the safeguarding team will be organized to discuss any issues etc. that arise.

Recruitment of ex-Offenders - In addition All Saints Church is committed to:

- assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). All Saints complies fully with the code of practice (copy in Safeguarding File in office) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly
- not discriminating unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check because of a conviction or other information revealed
- ensuring that recruiters only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended) only asking an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
- ensuring that this written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process
- application forms, job advertisements and recruitment briefs will contain a statement ensuring that, at interview, or in a separate discussion, an open and measured discussion takes place, about 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 withdrawal of an offer of employment or volunteer position.

- ensuring that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences, and have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- discussing any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Incumbent Minister

Churchwardens

This policy agreed at the Joint Church Council (JCC) meeting held on:
19 March 2024 and will be reviewed by March 2027 (every 3 years)

Minor revision January 2025