

Parish Guide to Recruitment & Employment

Section 1 Recruitment

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Welcome to our “**Parish Guides to Recruitment and Employment**”.

We have developed a series of helpful guides including:

Section 1:	Guide to Recruitment
Section 2:	Guide to Employing People
Section 3:	Guide to Employing Young People, Internships and Work Experience
Section 4:	Guide to Recruiting Volunteers
Section 5:	Guide to Pensions & Auto Enrolment
Section 6:	Guide to Redundancy (available on request)

These guides aim to ensure that you are equipped with the information and tools to enable you to meet your legal responsibilities when recruiting and employing someone. Whether you are employing just one person, or many, it is important you have the relevant documentation, policies and procedures in place.

This Guide should be read in conjunction with the Church of England’s “**Safe Recruitment and People Management Guidance**”, which outlines the Church’s commitment to promoting a safe environment and culture across all Church bodies by setting out safer recruitment/appointment processes and ensuring continued vigilance once someone is in role.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance>

Plan

Before commencing recruitment for a particular post, (both paid employees and volunteers), it is important to think through the role itself: what/who you are looking for, the funding you have available, and the process best suited to achieving your aims. This guide will provide you with information on legal requirements and best practice.

Funding

Before progressing with the recruitment stage, you need to consider the funding available and how long it is available for. Based on the budget/funding available, you should decide whether the post will be full time, part time, fixed term, or voluntary.

It is important to think about whether the post can be completed within the number of days / hours you can afford, and if it is not possible, you may need to adjust your expectations. Likewise, consider what salary you are able offer the post holder, and your expectations of that person. Think about whether the skills and experience required, match with your available budget. It is important to be realistic so that expectations of all parties can be managed effectively.

Legal & regulatory considerations

If you do not already employ staff, by embarking on the recruitment process you will shortly become an 'employer', with responsibilities and legal duties to comply with. Therefore, it is important that you read all the associated diocesan guides available on employing people. Also, information on employing people is available on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Your key considerations will be to ensure that you have registered as an employer with HMRC, and that you are aware of the necessary legal obligations regarding minimum wage, equality, pensions, health and safety, data protection etc.

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/employing-people>

Timescales

Ensure you begin preparing your recruitment in plenty of time. The recruitment process can often take several weeks/months from seeking approval to recruit, designing the job description, advertising, interviewing and notice periods, so you will need to ensure that you plan a realistic deadline for when you need to have someone in post. From advertising to appointment may take a minimum of 6 weeks.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest arises when there is a conflict between a duty to be carried out and a private or personal interest. It is recognised that in some Church Bodies, conflicts of interest are difficult to avoid. e.g. where a spouse, parent, or friend, is an employee or member of clergy.

Wherever possible, conflicts of interest should be avoided throughout the recruitment and selection process. Any potential conflict of interest should be identified and discussed, and steps put in place to manage and mitigate the conflict. The conflict and the steps taken to mitigate it should be recorded. Steps may include removing the person from the process, restricting their role in the process, or ensuring there is an independent person involved in the process, e.g. on the interview panel.

The 'personal approach'

It is recognised that in some circumstances Church Bodies will not be able to put out an open public request and may only be able to identify people from within a limited pool who are already members of the church or congregation.

This can make Church Bodies particularly vulnerable and such methods should only be used where it can be evidenced that there are no other options available. The fact that someone is already "known", (for example, as a member of the congregation), does not necessarily mean they are the best person to carry out the role.

Even if an individual is already known to the Parish, proportionality should never be confused with being casual about the importance of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

STEP 1 - JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

(See Appendix R1 – Template Job Description)

(See Appendix R2 – Template Children and Young People Job Description)

(See Appendix V3 – Volunteer Role Description)

Job descriptions and person specifications must make any safeguarding aspects clear, and refer to the Parish's commitment to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Why?

- Having clearly written documents will enable you to thoroughly consider what you want from a role and the sort of essential or desirable skills, experience and qualifications a candidate is expected to have to be able to fulfil that role.
- Having such documents in place will give people confidence that the Parish takes its work with children, young people and vulnerable adults seriously – the role and responsibilities are clear, as well as who the role is accountable to.

How?

- The first step to drawing up a job description and person specification is to properly consider the role.

The Role Consider:

- What contact & responsibilities does the job have in respect of children, young people and vulnerable adults - both direct & indirect?
- What is the role's purpose and what duties are involved?
- How and where will the role be carried out?
- What skills are needed for the role?
- What training is required?
- Where does the role fit into the Parish's structure?
- To whom does the role report?
- Is the role supervised or unsupervised?
- Is the role eligible for a DBS Check? If so, at what level?

Job Descriptions

The general layout of job descriptions may be similar, but the contents will need to reflect local requirements, as well as the nature of the role.

The job title should describe the function of the job, and whether, or not, it is a managerial position. People applying for the position from outside should have a clear indication of what the job is from the job title.

The job purpose section of the job description should come first to give the reader an overview of the role, however it may be useful to write this after you have listed the main duties and responsibilities as this will help you to clarify the job purpose. Here are some examples of what could be included in the job purpose:

- 'Support the local community by planning and delivering an engaging holiday club for school age children'.
- 'Manage the funds of the parish ensuring that all financial responsibilities and future projects are accounted for'.

The main duties of the job should then be listed. It is helpful to construct these sentences using a verb to highlight the principal activity. Examples: *plan; supply; develop; provide; advise; lead; organise; deliver; assist; administer; arrange; monitor; create; manage; supervise.*

Job descriptions within the safer recruitment policy should contain an *explicit statement as follows:

"The church takes the safety of everyone within the church very seriously and expects that everyone will work within the church safeguarding policy. In particular, the church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of actual abuse, to immediately raise this with their manager or parish safeguarding officer."

Job Descriptions Identify:	• The role title. • The main purpose of the role. • The main tasks or duties to be carried out. • To whom the role reports. • The extent of the role's contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults and the responsibility for safeguarding. • A statement that the person appointed will be expected to comply with Safeguarding Guidance/Code of Practice. • A statement that the person will be required to attend relevant safeguarding training. • General statements relevant to all roles, such as requirements relating to health and safety. • Hours and days of work and, if used, grade/band. • Where appropriate, a statement that the person appointed will require an enhanced DBS disclosure (with/without barred list/s) check. • Date the job description so that you know when it was last updated.
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Consideration needs to be given to the "indirect" aspect of a role and the potential contact it may have with children, young people and vulnerable adults. A role might not be working directly with these groups but presents certain opportunities e.g. where it is based, or the hours worked. The role may not meet the criteria for carrying out an enhanced DBS (with or without Barred List/s) check, but this does not stop other safer recruitment steps being taken, as well as a risk assessment being carried out so that any possible risks are identified and mitigated as far as possible.

Person specification

The person specification describes the attributes a suitable candidate will possess. It is used for drawing up any advertisements/notices about the job and forms the criteria for evaluating applicants and assessing candidates, helping to identify key areas for the focus of interview questions.

The person specification should clearly indicate whether the stated criteria are:

- Essential – those areas without which the job cannot be performed.
- Desirable – not essential to carrying out the duties, but which would be valuable and may assist in the final selection process if several candidates meet the essential criteria.

**Person Specifications
Describe:**

- Any qualifications or specific training required for the role.
- Any experience needed.
- Knowledge, skills and competencies required to carry out the duties of the role.
- General attributes which must include the need for commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Any Occupational Requirements under the Equality Act 2010 – e.g. if there is a genuine requirement for an individual to be a practising Christian, (see section on 'Genuine Occupational Requirement' (GOR)).

Sample person specification criteria

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<i>GCSE grade A-C in Maths and English, or equivalent.</i>	<i>Evidence of further professional development relevant to the role (e.g. secretarial, touch typing).</i>
Experience	<i>Experience working in an administrative/ secretarial role.</i>	<i>Experience of providing administrative support in a similar not for profit organisation.</i>
Skills and abilities	<i>Able to work on own initiative.</i> <i>Experience of co-ordinating events and meeting deadlines.</i> <i>Able to communicate effectively with a variety of people.</i>	<i>Proven experience of managing an event to completion including leading others.</i>
IT skills	<i>Working knowledge of Microsoft office.</i>	<i>Experience using Excel for accounting/budgeting purposes.</i>
General attributes	<i>Must include:</i> <i>The need for a commitment to the protection of safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.</i>	

You do not have to fill every box if it is not applicable, and you may add more elements to the left hand 'criteria' column, as appropriate to the role. This will provide you with a useful tool when interviewing, assessing and shortlisting candidates and provide the basis for writing the 'skills and experience' section in identification of any specific competencies required.

You should also be careful not to define any 'essential' qualities that could be deemed as discriminatory. For example, requiring a minimum of 5 years' experience in a particular area could rule out a young person who otherwise has the skills, qualifications and relevant experience to fulfil the role, or, strictly specifying a qualification where there may be 'an equivalent' level of competency, (for example, GSCE's and 'O' levels).

Occupational requirement (OR)

(See Appendix R7 – Religious Discrimination Legislation)

Where a decision has been made that the job must be performed by a Christian, this should also be stated within the job description and any job adverts placed and discussed at interview stage. It should show this by using wording such as:

"An occupational requirement exists for the post holder to be a practising Christian in accordance with the Equality Act 2010".

The Equality Act 2010 allows for a job to have an Occupational Requirement (OR) for the post holder to belong to a particular faith, where the duties of the post require it. For a genuine occupational requirement to exist, the faith element of the role should be 'determining and proportionate'. This means you must be able to show that being of a specific religion or belief is a central requirement of the job and not just one of many relevant factors.

When considering applying such a requirement, you must look at each post individually both in terms of the duties of the job and also the context in which it is carried out.

You should consider whether there are alternatives to applying an occupational requirement. For instance, if only a small part of the job needs someone to be a member of Christian faith, then it may be possible to redistribute work or re organise roles in such a way as to avoid applying a religious requirement to a particular post.

You can reasonably expect your staff to uphold the ethos, values and culture of the Church of England and should bear in mind that people may be able to do so without actually belonging to a particular religion or belief.

STEP 2 – ADVERTISING

(See Appendix R3 – Sample Advert)

(See Appendix R4 – Sample Children’s and Youth Work Advert)

Advertising

There is no legal requirement for vacancies to be advertised, either internally or externally, but it is good practice to do so. Advertising helps reach as wide a pool of people as possible, with the aim of attracting the best candidates and promoting diversity – people can’t apply for the job if they don’t know about it. Advertisements/notices provide the first impression of a Parish. An important part of this message is to highlight that the Parish is fully committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Advertising requirements

All advertisements/notices for employed roles must include the following details, or clearly indicate where they can be found:

- A statement which confirms the Parish’s commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment.
- The essential elements of the person specification required for the role.
- The pre-appointment checks that are required for the role.

Attracting candidates

Once you have prepared a detailed job description, you will need to think about the most effective way of attracting the best quality candidates. It is important to think about the requirements of the job and the specific attributes, skills and experience the applicants must have.

Internal or external

Often, potential candidates will become known to you through friends, family or colleagues (word of mouth). Whilst this can be a very useful source of recruitment, there can also be risks associated in recruiting someone you know. The Requirements of the Church of England’s Safer Recruitment Code must still apply.

For example, there may be issues with bias, or a potential conflict of interest. Also, if they are unsuccessful at the recruitment stage, or should things do not work out as anticipated during their probation period, this could make it difficult to deal with without damaging relationships.

Whatever source you chose, it is important to be objective in your selection process. You will need to weigh up the pros and cons of choosing to advertise externally, where you will have a broader reach and pool to select from, although this could be more expensive, or instead opting for an internal source which, on the face of it, may be easier but could leave you with limited choice and potential unforeseen issues.

You should also be careful when advertising through internal sources, not to indirectly discriminate and contravene the provisions of the *Equality Act 2010*. If your personal

contacts/congregation are disproportionately of a particular race or gender for instance, such a method could make it difficult for a varied profile of candidates to apply for the position. Therefore, this method should be in addition to, rather than instead of, wider methods.

Methods and sources

There are a variety of advertising methods available including:

- Local shops/newsagents.
- Post Office.
- School or village hall notice boards.
- Local paper.
- Job sites (e.g. 'Jobs in Kent', CofE 'Pathways', 'Charity Jobs').
- Email networks and online social media, websites.
- Relevant national publications (e.g. Church times, Youthwork magazine).

Recruitment advertisements can often be expensive, so it is important to select the publication or website appropriate for the type of candidate you are looking for and obtain a quote. Printed publications are usually more expensive but will tend to reach a local audience, however job sites are much cheaper, the advert will usually remain online for a longer period. You should also bear in mind that many people now use the internet as their sole method for job hunting.

Writing the advert

When writing an advertisement, it is important to give a brief but detailed account of the job whilst ensuring it is not discriminatory in any way. The advert should be eye catching and appealing to the type of person that you are trying to attract.

An advert should allow the reader to select or deselect themselves as a potential candidate for the role. A strong advert will help minimise the number of unsuitable candidates applying. It is useful to look through job papers, magazines and websites at similar roles to get an idea of what adverts are being placed. This will also provide you with an indication of the job market in relation to your role and salaries/benefits being offered and whether what you are offering, and the content of your job is realistic. Remember to add a closing date for applications. (See "General" section below).

Legal considerations

- Equality Act 2010

When placing an advert, always make sure that you do not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Being married or in a civil partnership.
- Being pregnant, on maternity/parental leave, or breastfeeding.
- Disability.
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.

This can be positively or negatively, for example, stating "*young trainee wanted*", would be age discrimination. Similarly, descriptions such as "*cleaning lady*", or, "*handyman*", would be sex discrimination. Similarly, you should only specify the criteria for the postholder to hold a full UK driving license if there is a specific job requirement to drive a vehicle for the fulfilment of their duties. If not, you may be discriminating from someone who is unable to drive owing to a disability, or, precluding someone from applying who may be able to utilise other forms of transport (i.e. to travel around the diocese).

You can only actively discriminate if the protected characteristic which you require is truly relevant to the job, i.e. if you have a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, "*female security officer required to conduct searches on women*", or, where the role specifically requires the postholder to be a communicant member of the Church of England.

You should also be mindful of using only binary pronouns such as 'he/she' and include non-binary pronouns such as 'them/they'.

- **Minimum wage and working time directive**

You should ensure your advertising does not break the law. For example, advertising a job with a salary of £10 an hour would be illegal (minimum wage law) as would advertising a job where people were expected to work continually for more than 6 hours with no breaks (working time directive).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/minimum-wage-rates>
[Maximum weekly working hours: Overview - GOV.UK.](#)

- **Data protection and GDPR**

It is each Parish's responsibility to ensure that their entire safer recruitment and people management process is compliant with current data protection legislation. This begins from the point at which personal data belonging to a candidate is collected, through to how this is disposed of, deleted or erased.

Any personal data processed during the recruitment and selection process will need to be covered in a privacy notice, which must be supplied to applicants at the start of the process so they know exactly what data will be processed and why, (i.e. for what purpose(s)) and related matters, such as the lawful basis/bases for processing such data, who it will be shared with, how long it will be retained and a person's rights in relation to such data. If this information is to be retained once a person is appointed, this will either need to be included in the same privacy notice, or a further privacy notice given to appointed candidates when they commence in a role.

For further information, please refer to the "**GDPR Toolkit for Parishes**".

<https://www.rochester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/rochester-diocese-gdpr-parish-toolkit.pdf>

General

When deciding a closing date for applications you will need to think about the printing deadlines and dates and how long it will take someone to complete an application e.g. to contact you, receive an application pack, complete and return.

It is also a good idea to include an interview date on your advert; this will ensure candidates applying can make themselves available for that day. Ensure you allow yourself enough time to shortlist and liaise with any others about the shortlist selection. Don't forget to include details of how candidates can apply and who they need to contact.

STEP 3 – APPLICATION PACK

(See Appendix R5 - Template Application Form)

(See Appendix R8 - Diocese Ethos & Values Statement)

An application pack and the completion of an application form is important in relation to safeguarding for the following reasons:

- It reinforces the value that the Parish places on work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and the seriousness with which it takes the appointment of those who work with such groups.
- It gives a clear signal to anyone intent on abusing the trust placed in them that the Parish is vigilant about the safety and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Every candidate should be expected to complete an application form, and it is important that all candidates are treated fairly and in a transparent and equitable way, however well they are known. A standardised application form helps ensure information can be gathered in a consistent format.

Some application packs may be in paper format, but in others it will mean providing a link to the Parish's website where all relevant information can be found, including the statements and policies as outlined in this Guide.

Applications

When someone responds to the advert and wishes to apply for your vacancy you should have an application pack ready prepared to send out to candidates. This might include:

- Application form.
- Job description.
- Privacy notice.
- Confidential declaration form.
- Equal opportunities policy.
- Ethos and values statement.
- Reference consent form.
- Information about your church

You should send out an application form for all applicants to complete, even if they have provided you with a CV, as information can be omitted. It is important that you obtain complete and consistent information for all candidates. This will make it easier to assess candidates fairly and objectively when you come to shortlisting.

Care should be taken when designing your application form to ensure that any unnecessary or discriminatory information is not collected. For example, it is not necessary to know a person's age when considering them for a position as this could result in age bias and unfair discrimination. Therefore, you should not ask for their date of birth until after they have been offered the position. Similarly, it is not necessary to collect referee information from all candidates at the point of application. The references form (see Appendix 6a) can be given to the candidates invited to attend an interview. Consider the questions you wish to ask on the application form, and how candidates will be able to show you they have the necessary skills and experience to be considered.

Your application form should ask employees to confirm their right to live and work in the UK as you will need to undertake checks prior to an appointment in order to fulfil the requirements of the UK Border Agency.

As a bare minimum this should include an application form and job description. However, some employers use this as an opportunity to 'sell' the organisation / position to a potential candidate as to why they should work for you, therefore you may wish to include additional information about the church, projects, salary and any benefits. This will help you to attract the best possible candidates. It is also a good idea to include a cover letter or email containing the closing date and relevant contact details.

Regulated activity requirements

For roles that fall within the scope of the Church of England's Safer Recruitment Code of Practice there are specific requirements.

Regulated Activity Requirements:

The Parish's:

- Statement of its commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
 - Safeguarding Policy.
 - Safer Recruitment Policy.
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
-
- The job description and person specification.
 - The selection procedure for the post.
 - A privacy notice detailing how the applicant's personal data will be processed during the recruitment and selection process.

An application form must be used for recruitment to all employed roles that fall within the scope of the Church of England's Safer Recruitment guidance.

CVs must not be accepted on their own.

All application forms for employed roles must include:

- Personal details including current names, and contact details (home address, email address, telephone number).
- Qualifications, where appropriate/required.
- An opportunity for the applicant to address the criteria set out in the person specification, including details of the skills and attributes they bring to the role.
- A completed Church of England Confidential Declaration.
- Details of referees.
- Full history since leaving school - education, employment and any voluntary work, including present (or most recent) employment and reason for leaving, as well as an explanation of any gaps.
- A declaration that all information provided on the application form is "true & complete".

Confidential declaration forms (CDF)

CDF REQUIREMENTS:

A Church of England Confidential Declaration Form (CDF) must be completed by all applicants for employed roles that engage in regulated activity or otherwise work/have substantial contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, thus requiring an enhanced DBS (with/without barred list/s) check. The CDF must be submitted at the same time as the job application form. All recruitment documentation must explain that a completed CDF is required for that role and the basis on which that requirement is made.

The CDF must only be viewed by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment & selection process. Church Bodies must have an appropriate policy in place to ensure information is retained in line with current retention schedules, and is reviewed regularly to keep it up to date.

NB: If an applicant does not want to complete a CDF, then the application process must be terminated.

Please find these forms by clicking onto the following link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/cofe-pn-for-cdf-e-manual-may-2025.docx>

Equal opportunities

(See Appendix R6 – Template Equal Opportunities Policy)

As an employer, you should take steps to make your workplace inclusive.

A good start is to have a workplace policy covering equality, diversity and inclusion. This might also be called an 'equal opportunities policy'.

An equal opportunities policy helps everyone to know:

- The organisation supports and treats everyone fairly.
- What kind of behaviour is expected of them.
- About discrimination and the law, and what is not acceptable.
- Where to find the procedures for resolving any problems.

When looking to hire new staff, you should ideally advertise in at least 2 different places to reach a wide range of people from different backgrounds. You can also promote your values as an equal opportunities employer and who you would welcome applications from:

- Anyone who believes they meet the essential requirements of the job.
- Anyone under-represented in the organisation – this is called '*positive action*'.

If you take positive action, you must be able to prove it's been reasonably thought through and does not discriminate against others. For example, you might say that: "*applications from qualified candidates with disabilities are welcome*". You could encourage your team to develop awareness / training on skills that help them including:

- Use the job description and person specification to choose the best applicant.

- Have an inclusive attitude.
- Avoid making decisions based on what they think or believe about a person because of their protected characteristics (unconscious bias).

STEP 4 – SELECTION PROCESS

(See Appendix R9 – Template Shortlisting Table)

(See Appendix R10 – Template Invite to Interview Letter)

Shortlisting

Once the closing date has passed, all the completed applications should be given due consideration. You should decide who will review the applications and carry out shortlisting. This should be someone who will be involved in making the final recruitment decision. Best practice would be for two people to conduct the shortlisting exercise as this will demonstrate an unbiased approach and reduce subjectivity by not involving too many people.

Shortlisting Requirements:

Shortlisting must be carried out by the person responsible for the appointment and at least one other person.

Applicants must be shortlisted for interview based on the evidence provided in their application form and CDF and only those who meet all the essential criteria as defined on the person specification must be shortlisted (even where there is only one applicant).

Application forms must be properly scrutinised and any gaps or queries (e.g. in employment/education/church/volunteering history etc) must be marked for further exploration if the applicant is shortlisted and invited to interview.

The purpose of shortlisting is to identify, from their application form, those individuals who best meet the selection criteria for the role and who you wish to take forward to the next stage of the recruitment and selection process, which is often an interview.

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

Applicants should be shortlisted by evaluating the information provided on their application form against the person specification requirements.

Shortlisting panel

The person responsible for the role leads on the shortlisting process, with support from other members of the interview panel (minimum of two people). This helps maintain consistency across this stage of the process. It is good practice to record shortlisting decisions so that they can be evidenced and, if requested, verbal/written feedback provided to those not shortlisted.

Incomplete application forms

If an application is not fully completed, or it is not clear how an applicant meets all the essential criteria, the application would usually be rejected from the process at this stage. There may be exceptional cases where it is decided to shortlist based on the

information that is provided and then the issues/gaps etc. explored further during the interview.

Shortlisting table

It can be useful to draw up a shortlisting table using the person specification taking the essential and desirable skills and using a tick box exercise to benchmark the candidates against one another. Those selected for interview should meet the 'essential' criteria. If you have a high volume or very high calibre of applicants, you may wish to also use the 'desirable' criteria.

Invite for interview

Once a decision has been made, letters or emails should be sent out to the candidates who have been selected for interview giving the date, time and location that you would like to see them. It is a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 that interviews are accessible for candidates, so you will need to ask candidates to notify you of any special requirements, (reasonable adjustments), you may need to make for the interview.

You should also include some information about what the interview will involve and how long it is expected to last. You should ask any candidate invited to interview to complete a *References Consent Form*. You may also wish to ask candidates to bring their passport to the interview, so that you can fulfil UK Border Agency requirements before any offer is made.

Candidate correspondence

(See Appendix R11 Template Not Shortlisted Letter)

- Decline candidates

Finally, you will also need to write to the candidates who have not been shortlisted for interview, thanking them for their interest. If you had a high volume of applicants and as a result are rejecting strong candidates, you may wish to include in your letter or email that whilst they have been unsuccessful on this occasion, you will retain their details and may contact them in future about any suitable vacancies. This means that should your first round of interviews be unsuccessful, or the selected candidate doesn't work out, you can revisit the other candidates.

- Retain on file

All candidate applications must be retained on file for a minimum of 6 months following the successful appointment; this includes any selection criteria you have used.

In the event of a claim for discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 in connection with your selection process, you will need to provide documentary evidence to demonstrate that you have followed a fair and objective selection process.

Record Keeping

All Parishes must maintain a record of pre appointment checks for all individuals successfully appointed to roles that are involved in regulated activity, and it is good practice to do so for all other roles.

Record Keeping Requirements:

All Parishes must maintain a record of pre-appointment checks for all individuals successfully appointed to roles that fall within the scope of the Church of England's Safer recruitment guidance.

The information to be recorded for each individual applicant must include (where relevant):

Role details

- Personal details of the individual – e.g. name, address, date of birth
- Proof of identity checks carried out
- Evidence of qualifications obtained

If a DBS/barred List check at the appropriate level has been required, then you need to record:

- The date of issue on the disclosure certificate
- The name of the subject
- The level of disclosure requested
- The position for which the disclosure was requested
- The unique reference number (URN) of the disclosure
- The details of the recruitment decision taken

For checks carried out on individuals who have lived, worked or volunteered outside of the UK:

- If employed, the checks carried out to establish the individual's right to work in the UK
- Details of written references requested, obtained and verified by telephone
- Details of any gaps in employment/education/volunteering history
- If relevant, details of registration with appropriate professional body
- If relevant, record of DBS risk assessment
- Record of interview questions, answers and notes

The record must include whether or not each pre-appointment check has been carried out, the date on which each check was completed, the evidence obtained and who carried out the check.

Other records that must also be kept:

- Where relevant, annually reviewed safeguarding policies & procedures signed off at the appropriate level
- Ongoing up to date employee and volunteer files, including DBS rechecks
- Safeguarding training completed and scheduled refresher training
- Incident and concern recording – full chronology, signed, times, dated etc.

STEP 5 – INTERVIEWS

(See Appendix R12 – Example Competency Interview Questions)

(See Appendix R13 – Template Interview Assessment Form)

An interview gives the opportunity to investigate an applicant's motivation for working with the Parish, including with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, as well as explore their past experience.

It is also another opportunity to reinforce the value that the Parish places on their work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and the seriousness with which they take the appointment of those who work with such groups.

Interview candidates should receive:

- Confirmation of the interview.
- Details of the interview process; and who will be present.
- Details of any tasks or additional selection activities to be undertaken as part of the interview process.
- Details of any documentation they must provide e.g. proof of qualification(s), proof of identity in accordance with Right to Work in the UK requirements.

It is best practice to hold interviews face to face. Exceptions to this might be an applicant from outside the UK whose initial interview may be conducted virtually or where Government/Legal restrictions have been introduced e.g. due to a national emergency such as COVID19.

Interview requirements

Interview Requirements:

All employed roles falling within the scope of this Code require an interview of shortlisted candidates (even where there is only one applicant).

Interviews must be held with a panel of at least two, one of whom must:

- Have completed the Church of England Safer Recruitment & People Management training within the last three years.
- Be competent in interviewing practice.
- Possess the appropriate expertise to assess the candidate's competence in the role.

Wherever possible, interview panel members must not be closely related to the candidate. If this is unavoidable, the conflict of interest must be declared, and arrangements must be made for an additional person to be present.

Interviews must explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults through a combination of questions that encompass the Parish's values and expected behaviours, with questions that focus on establishing skills, knowledge, qualifications & previous experience.

Any gaps, anomalies or discrepancies that have been identified in the application documentation during the shortlisting process must be discussed with the candidate during the interview and a satisfactory explanation provided. A note of these discussions must be made on the interview paperwork.

Selection methods

Depending on the role, as well as interviews, the decision-making process can sometimes be enhanced by using additional selection methods e.g. tasking the candidate with a presentation or observing the candidate interacting with a particular group.

Planning the interview

If interviews are your chosen selection method, you will first need to decide who will be conducting the interview. The 'Line Manager' / Vicar, and a small panel of PCC members would be suitable. The interview panel should ideally consist of at least 2 people. It would also be a good idea for someone to be available who knows what the job involves and to speak to candidates on the day, if they are not a member of the interview panel. You should avoid anyone with a conflict of interest from sitting on an interview panel; (e.g. family member or friend).

CYP appointments

For Children and Young People appointments please contact the Diocesan Children and Young People's Mission & Ministry team for assistance with the selection and interview process.

Interview format

You will then need to draw up a list of questions prior to the interview, use the job description as your basis for this as you will need to ask questions which will establish their skills and ability in relation to the requirements of the job. It is important that all candidates are given the same opportunity in the interview therefore the same questions should be asked to each candidate. Additional probing questions may vary depending on what the candidate says.

Interview questions should be objective, non-discriminatory and relate only to the person's competency to do the job. Details about their home life, age, marital status etc. are irrelevant.

Do NOT ask these questions:

- "How old are you?"
- "Do you have children?"
- "What arrangements do you have for childcare?"
- "Are you married?"
- "Where are you from?"
- "How many sick days have you had over the past year?"
- "What does your husband/wife/father do?"

Questions asked during the interview should explore the candidates:

- Skills, abilities and motivation to work.
- Experience with the requirements of the role.
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries.
- Reasons for leaving their current / previous work.

- Understanding of relevant safeguarding issues and good practice.

These areas should be explored using 'open' competency-based questions, for example, asking for examples from the candidate's experience ("tell us about a time..."), asking for responses to a variety of scenarios, probing the answers given ("how...?").

The interview should also provide the opportunity:

- To assess any training and support needs the candidate may have.
- To allow the candidate to ask any questions they may have about the role.

Reasonable adjustments

Should an applicant with a disability apply, you should not only ask whether they require any reasonable adjustments to assist them in attending the interview, but also what, if any, reasonable adjustments may be required for the performance of their work, rather than ask whether their disability, or neurodiversity, prevents them from doing it.

It is important to understand that you must not directly discriminate against a person because of their disability, as this is a protected characteristic. A 'disability' is not simply defined as physical but may also include neurodiversity or mental health condition.

The government may be able to provide a grant to someone with a disability or health condition to support the provision of reasonable workplace adjustments. This may include assistance with accessing work; support in interviews; travel to and from work, as well as support within the workplace.

The individual would need to apply for a grant directly, but the employer may be asked to pay up front costs and claim back later. Please see the link below for further details:

[Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK](#)

To make the interview process more accessible for candidates with additional needs, you could:

- Send out clear information about the interview process well in advance.
- Ask candidates if they require any reasonable adjustments, including extra time for any tests, assistive technology, or a separate room.
- Consider alternatives to traditional interviews such as work-based trials or work-related tasks.
- Allow the candidate to bring notes and be able to refer to them.
- Make questions direct and specific.
- Allow for additional time.
- Be clear about who the panel are and their role.

Activities

You may wish to include another exercise or activity as part of the interview, but consider this carefully, as it needs to be relevant to the role and realistic to ask the candidates to complete. Examples include 'in-tray' exercises, or a presentation, case studies, etc.

Conducting the interview

Interviews should be held in a quiet room where you will not be disturbed. Consider:

- The layout of the room and what will best suit the style of interview and help in putting the candidate at ease.
- Ensure that a jug of water and glasses are available.
- You will also need to ensure that any requirements requested by the candidate (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010) have been met. (See previous section 'Reasonable Adjustments').

Timings

Ensure you allow sufficient time to conduct the interview and enough time between candidates in case an interview over runs. It is important to be prompt and start the interview on time to show respect and give a professional impression to the candidate. Usually, you should allow between 45 minutes to an hour for the interview with a 15 minute break between candidates.

You may also consider showing the candidate around before or after the interview to give them a feel for church/office so that they can ask relevant questions. If you do this then you will need to allow more time.

Notetaking

One member of the interview panel should be designated as the notetaker. The candidate's responses to each question should be documented to allow you to review and benchmark candidates accordingly. Please remember that ALL interview notes (including from notetaker and panel members) are disclosable to the candidate should they request it, so you should ensure that notes are objective, transparent and fair.

Interview structure

- **Welcome**
The interview should start with a welcome and all members of the interview panel should introduce themselves to the candidate. It may be best to begin with some background about the church/the role to put the candidate at ease.
- **Presentations or exercises (optional)**
It is also recommended that any presentations or exercises are completed first so that the candidate can relax into the interview afterwards.

- **Questioning**

As mentioned above, plan your questions in advance by using a range of open, closed and probing questions. Once you have asked your questions, you should give the candidate the opportunity to ask any questions that they may have about the role. It is also a good idea to discuss hours of work, availability for work, and salary at this stage.

- **Closing**

Finish the interview by thanking the candidate for coming and their interest in the role. Tell the candidate when you hope to make a decision by, and when they can expect to hear from you.

Evaluation and scoring

You should ensure that you have a clear 'scoring' mechanism to assess any such activity, so that you can objectively justify your decisions. You will need to consider how you will administer these activities. Ideally, they should be done on the day of the interview in a controlled environment or requested to be submitted prior to the interview. This means you will be able to fairly assess each candidate's performance of the task. It is also a good idea to ask the candidate about the activity during the interview: "how did they find it"; "did they have enough time"; "would they have done anything different"; etc.

Gaps, anomalies & discrepancies

The interview is an ideal place to address any gaps or discrepancies that have been identified in the application so far. It is recognised that such conversations can be challenging and uncomfortable, but they are vital for ensuring nothing is left to chance. Candidates should understand that such anomalies are queried and there is a need for as much clarity as possible.

After the interview

(See Appendix R14 – Template Regret After Interview Letter)

(See Appendix E1 – Template Offer Letter)

(See Appendix E2 – Template References Consent Form)

After the interviews have taken place, the panel should discuss the suitability of the candidates. A decision will need to be reached objectively in relation to the job description and person specification. If you have used a 'scoring system' ensure that all members of the panel are clear about what they require from the candidate in meeting the scoring criteria. All panel members should agree with the final decision.

If you are struggling to decide between two strong candidates, you may wish to ask them both to return for a second interview. However, you will need to be clear about what information is required and what you intend to achieve from the second interview.

If no suitable candidate is apparent following the interviews, it is best to commence the recruitment process again. Appointing the wrong person can cause more problems in the long run.

Once you have reached a decision, a conditional offer can be made to the candidate, subject to satisfactory references and DBS check (if applicable). You should follow up a

verbal offer to the successful candidate in writing with an Offer Letter and Statement of Terms (see separate employer guidance pack). You should also write to unsuccessful candidates informing them of your decision.

All applications should be retained on file for a minimum of 6 months, although best practice is that notes from interviews held should be retained on file for 12 months.

STEP 6 – PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Safer recruitment

Carrying out pre-appointment checks is important for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults as it helps a Parish to establish a more rounded picture of the applicant's suitability to work with these groups.

If at any point during this process a discrepancy is highlighted in the information provided by the applicant, e.g. dates of employment or reasons for leaving provided on an application form differing to those received on a reference, they should be given the opportunity to explain the discrepancy. It is a good idea to keep a written record of such clarifications on the individual's application file. (See section "Record Keeping").

Whilst reference checking plays an important part in the pre-appointment checks process, references don't always provide much information and therefore it is important to consider what else can be done to build up as true and rounded picture of the applicant as possible. (See section "References").

"Safer Recruitment" goes beyond simply obtaining a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Certificate. (See section "DBS checks").

Proof of ID

If an enhanced DBS check is being undertaken, then an ID check is automatically completed as part of that process. Where an enhanced DBS check is not able to be sought then identity checks should be undertaken to establish, as far as possible, that the individual is who they claim to be. Ideally this should be through formal photographic identity, such as a passport or driving license and confirmation of current address. It is a good idea to ask to see an original birth certificate (issued within a year of the birth), any name change documentation and current documentation (e.g. passports and drivers' licences) so that all names are 'checked'.

References

(See Appendix E2 – Template Reference Consent Form)

(See Appendix E3 – Template Reference Request Letter)

Following completion of interviews, you should ask your preferred candidate to provide the names and contact details of their referees. You will need to have decided on your policy/guidelines for references. Good practice would be to ask for 2 or 3 referees including the current or most recent employer. For people employed in a regulated role you may choose to stipulate the references more closely to cover the last 5 years employment history. Best practice would always be to include the current or most recent employer. Whatever you decide must be applied consistently to all new recruits.

You will also need to determine when you intend to contact the references and your deadline for these being returned. You can stipulate that the employee may not start until all or at least one reference has been received, or you could state that completion of their probationary period is subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Either way, you should inform the candidate when you will be contacting the referees, particularly their current employer in case they need to speak to them first.

Many employers will only provide a 'factual' reference confirming the job title and dates in they were employed. This is common practice in many organisations carried out for legal reasons and should therefore not be considered as a reflection of poor performance.

Some organisations will require written consent from the employee to provide a reference, in which case you will need to ask the candidate to put something in writing to this effect for you to forward to the previous employer.

Referencing can be undertaken online or by email. If sending by post, it is usual practice to supply the referee with a stamped addressed envelope to return the reference; this is not only polite but ensures that the completed confidential reference is received directly by you, or the person who has requested it.

If a referee contacts you to provide a verbal reference, you should always ask them to follow up in writing. It would also be useful to take a note of your telephone conversation.

Where the offer or probationary period is subject to receipt of satisfactory references and this has been confirmed to the individual in writing, employment

Employment/volunteering/education references

This type of reference should be sought directly from the relevant organisation, including overseas where applicable, not from an applicant's colleague and, ideally, be provided on headed paper/from a business email to verify the legitimacy of the organisation providing it.

Details requested should include:

- Where the individual has been employed/volunteered/studied.
- The dates of employment/volunteering, or duration of study.
- The position held, or study undertaken.
- Individual's suitability to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Any concerns about the individual working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Any substantiated allegations, disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, in relation to working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- The reasons for leaving employment, voluntary work, training or study (if known).

Parishes should consider reserving the right to contact any one of the applicant's current/previous employment, volunteering or education contacts.

Employment may be terminated on the grounds of a poor reference. However, you need to be careful as to the nature of the reference and how it impacts their ability to do the job. You should seek further advice on a case-by-case basis from the Diocese office.

Personal references

Personal references should only be sought as a last resort due to their limitations in terms of evidential effectiveness. Personal references might be sought from group/club leaders, mentors, neighbours, or family friends. The referee should know the person well and have up-to-date knowledge of them.

Details requested should include:

- How they know the applicant.
- How long they have known the applicant.
- An honest overview of the applicant's character.
- Applicant's suitability to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Any concerns about the applicant working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Any knowledge of the applicant being investigated over safeguarding issues.

Health information

(See Appendix E6 - Template Health Declaration Form)

The purpose of requesting such information is to identify whether an applicant has a disability or health issue for which they might need support or reasonable adjustments to be able to fulfil their role safely.

Health data is special category personal data under current data protection legislation, which means Church Bodies must ensure that it is protected and only accessed by those who need to see it.

Care needs to be taken when asking someone about their health. This should only be done after an offer of employment has been made to avoid any discrimination in the selection process. Only questions that are necessary and relate to the applicant's ability to perform the core duties of the role should be asked. This means asking whether the applicant has any health problems that might prevent them from performing a particular function in question, rather than sending them a general medical questionnaire.

It should be made clear that answers to such questions will not necessarily prevent the applicant from taking up the role, but that it is important for the Parish to be aware of any relevant health information so that they can provide appropriate support and reasonable adjustments to the individual in that role.

ID checks, immigration & right to work (NB: different to DBS ID checks)

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 sets out the law on rights to work law and the prevention of illegal working.

The onus is on the employer to ensure that the prospective employee has the right to live and work in the UK.

There is UK Border Agency guidance on how to be certain that the employee has this permission whilst ensuring that your recruitment practices do not discriminate against individuals on racial grounds.

You are required to check and keep a copy of the documents to obtain statutory defence against conviction for employing an illegal worker.

You should ask all your potential employees to provide one of the original documents in List A (below), or a combination of documents as listed in List B (below).

List A You will need to see at least one document from the list below:	List B You will need to see two documents from the combination list below:
• A passport showing that the holder is a British Citizen, or a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK; • A passport or national identity card showing that the holder is a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland; • A residence permit, registration certificate or document certifying or indicating permanent residence issued by the Home Office, the Border and Immigration Agency, or the UK Border Agency to a national from a European Economic Area country or Switzerland; • A permanent residence card or document issued by the Home Office, the Border and Immigration Agency, or the UK Border Agency to the family member of a national from a European Economic Area country or Switzerland; • A passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK. Once you have checked one of these documents there is no need to ask for any further documents contained in List B.	Combination: • A document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and name. This could be a P45, P60, National Insurance card, or a letter from a Government agency. Plus, one of the following documents: • An Immigration Status Document (ISD) issued by the Home Office, the Border and Immigration Agency, or the UK Border Agency to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the person named in it is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK; • A full birth certificate issued in the UK, which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents; • A full adoption certificate issued in the UK which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's adoptive parents; • A birth certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland; • An adoption certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland; • A certificate of registration or naturalisation stating that the holder is a British Citizen; • A letter issued by the Home Office, the Border and Immigration Agency, or the UK Border Agency to the holder which indicates that the person named in it is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK.

NB: If the document check indicates a time limit on the individual's right to work in the UK you must carry out a follow-up check every 12 months to ensure that the employee has retained that right. Where there is a limit to the employee's right to remain in the UK a clause needs to be included within the employment contract that continued employment is on the basis that this right is retained.

Further information can be obtained from the guidance available on the UK

Border Agency website: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

Please note: The above ID checks are different to those required for the DBS, although some documents required may be the same.

Overseas criminal records checks

The DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas, therefore a DBS check may not provide a complete picture of an individual's criminal record, whether they are a British Citizen or not.

A "*Certificate of Good Character*" - also sometimes referred to as 'Certificate or Letter of Good Conduct' - can be requested by an applicant, usually from the home embassy of the country/ies that they have lived or worked in. The application process for the certificate varies from country to country and up-to-date guidance can be found on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

Where the information cannot be obtained or is not available, the applicant should be asked to provide evidence of their attempt to obtain a certificate, and the responsible person should take extra care when taking up references or checking any previous employment record. In such cases, it would be advisable to seek additional references, as well as actually speak to referees on the telephone.

There are companies who carry out overseas checks for many different countries, which may offer a more robust solution to the 'Letter of Good Conduct'.

There may be occasions when it is deemed not safe to try and obtain such a check (e.g. an applicant may have fled a country and sought asylum). In such cases, the person responsible for the recruitment of the individual would need to ensure they are satisfied with that decision and that the decision-making process and reasons for reaching that decision are well documented so that it can be evidenced later if required.

DBS checks

[Support for Lead/Deputy Recruiters - Diocese of Rochester](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

[Diocese of Rochester | Guidance - Safer recruitment \(anglican.org\)](#)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/safer-recruitment-and-people-management>

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is the government agency that provides information about an individual's criminal record history, in the form of a DBS certificate, helping organisations to make informed recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

There are 4 levels of DBS Check:

- Basic.
- Standard
- Enhanced
- Enhanced with Barred List(s).

Depending on the level of check applied for, a DBS certificate will identify if an individual has any criminal convictions; if they are barred from working with children or vulnerable adults and if the police hold any other relevant information about that person.

Obtaining a DBS certificate must NOT be seen as a substitute for carrying out other safer recruitment checks and processes, or as the end point of the process.

Regulated activity

It is a criminal offence to appoint someone who is known to be barred from working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in 'Regulated Activity'. Church Bodies therefore have a responsibility to request criminal record checks on everybody that it is appointed to a role in Regulated Activity.

Please refer to the Church of England guidance for further information on DBS checks. Please note: This guidance applies to voluntary workers as well as paid employees and workers.

USEFUL LINKS

ACAS

The ACAS employment advice website:

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461>

CIPD

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

<https://www.cipd.co.uk>

Gov.UK

Government website where you can find out information on recruiting people:

<https://www.gov.uk/>

CofE

Church of England Parish Resources with advice on recruiting people:

<http://www.pariahresources.org.uk/people/>

Rochester Diocese Safeguarding policies and advice:

[Diocese of Rochester | Safeguarding \(anglican.org\)](#)

USEFUL CONTACTS

ACAS helpline

(Free impartial advice for employers and employees)

<https://www.acas.org.uk/advice>

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APPENDICES

Template List

Recruitment Templates (R)

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Appendix R2	Template CYP Job Description
Appendix R3	Sample Advert
Appendix R4	Sample CYP Advert
Appendix R5	Template Application Form
Appendix R6	Template Equal Opportunities Policy
Appendix R7	Religious Discrimination Legislation (incl. OR)
Appendix R8	Diocese Ethos and Values Statement
Appendix R9	Template Shortlisting Table
Appendix R10	Template Invitation to Interview Letter
Appendix R11	Template Not Shortlisted Letter
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Employment Templates (E)

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Appendix E8	Template Contract Variation Letter
Appendix E9	Template Contract for Services Agreement
Appendix E10	Template Staff Handbook
Appendix E11	Template Response to Resignation Letter
Appendix E12	Template New Employee (Payroll) Form

Volunteer Templates (V)

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Appendix V2	Template Volunteer CYP Application Form
Appendix V3	Template Volunteer Role Description
Appendix V4	Template Volunteer Agreement
Appendix V5	Template Ending Volunteer Agreement Letter

Other (as required)

CofE	Confidential Declaration Forms https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/cofe-pn-for-cdf-e-manual-may-2025.docx
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