

St Barnabas Church, Swanmore

Volunteer Safer Recruitment Guidance and Procedure

What is 'Safer Recruitment and People Management'? The Church of England's 'Promoting a Safer Church' safeguarding policy statement outlines the Church's commitment to promoting a safe environment and culture across all Church bodies for children, young people and adults. An essential part of this commitment is ensuring that all those who volunteer with vulnerable groups are suitable for the role they will carry out.

The Church of England Safer Recruitment & People Management Guidance states "There is no legal definition of a volunteer however, the NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) defines volunteering as "any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual."

Guidance Statement - St Barnabas Church commits to safely recruiting and supporting all volunteers who have any responsibility related to children, young people and adults attending Church activities. Policy for recruitment of ex-offenders and safeguarding policies are in place, approved by the PCC.

What follows is a safer recruitment procedure checklist for the recruitment of volunteers into roles involving children, young people and adults at St Barnabas Church. It applies to all new appointments made on or after **21st July 2022** and is based on Safer Recruitment & People Management Guidance. Click on the following e-manual link [Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance | The Church of England](#) to read the full guidance.

The overall accountability for approval of volunteer appointments rests with the PCC. The decision to appoint to a voluntary position must be made by those that have authority, which is the PCC at parish level or their delegated person(s).

- In practice, the responsibility for the recruitment into a volunteer activity role is delegated to the children, young person and/or adult church activity leader(s), supported by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Lead DBS Recruiter) and Deputy DBS Recruiter who are all trained in safer recruitment. (In the safer recruitment checklist the church activity leader(s) are referred to as the 'responsible person').
- In practice, the responsibility for the decision to appoint is delegated to the responsible person. The PCC must be informed by the responsible person that the volunteer has been safer recruited to an activity. Appointment approval must then be recorded in the PCC minutes. Should the PCC, for reasons that sit outside this safer recruitment process remit, not wish to approve a volunteer appointment then a rationale must be provided and recorded.

Click on the following e-manual link [Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance | The Church of England](#) to read explanations of Sections 1 – 16 referred to in this safer recruitment procedure checklist for the recruitment of volunteers.

Step One: Identify the responsible person & volunteer role to be undertaken

- A **responsible person (section 1)** is identified for each volunteer role being recruited for and is the children, young person and/or adult church activity lead. The respective church activity lead details can be found amongst the recruitment pack in the information hub on the church website.
- Clear **role descriptions (section 2)** are written for each volunteer position. Role descriptions set out what tasks the volunteer will do, what skills are required and activity lead they are directly accountable to. Identified within the role descriptions are the level of DBS check and what role specific safeguarding training is required of anyone applying. Volunteer role descriptions can be found amongst the recruitment pack in the information hub on the church website.

Step Two: Decide where to 'advertise' the volunteer role & application process

- Any vacant volunteer role related to a children, young people and/or adult activity will be **advertised (section 3)** by the responsible person via pew leaflet, church noticeboards or word of mouth.
- Applicants should be made aware by the responsible person of the **application process (section 4)**. An **application form (appendix b)** must be used for all voluntary roles related to children, young people and/or adults. Once completed the application form should be handed to the responsible person. These forms must be stored securely in line with data protection requirements.
- The applicant should be informed by the responsible person that the volunteer role is covered by safer recruitment and must be made aware of safeguarding policies & procedures found in the information hub on the church website.

Step Three: Informal meeting, references & decisions

- Once the application form has been received by the responsible person they should **shortlist applicants (section 6)** and arrange a face to face **interview/assessment (section 7)**. In practice an informal chat with the proposed volunteer.
- The responsible person will call for references asking specifically about the applicant's suitability to work with vulnerable groups. The completed **reference request form (appendix c)**, should be handed to the responsible person. These forms must be stored securely in line with data protection requirements.
- The responsible person should liaise with the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Lead DBS Recruiter) who will make contact with the applicant and ask them to complete a **Confidential Declaration Form (section 5) (appendix d)**. If the applicant does not wish to complete the form, the application must not proceed and must be terminated. Click on [Section 5](#) of the Safer Recruitment Management guidance to read more. The applicant will be assisted by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Lead DBS Recruiter) or Deputy DBS Recruiter with completing the form. The completed Confidential

Declaration Form should be returned to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Lead DBS Recruiter) and must be stored securely in line with data protection requirements. The Confidential Declaration Form should be completed every 3 years (or at least reviewed by the person and re-signed and dated if there is no new information to declare). If any information is disclosed at this stage the Parish Safeguarding Officer **must** contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice on how to proceed, including what relevant confidential information can be shared with the PCC and how this should be recorded.

- Volunteers should be informed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Lead DBS Recruiter) or Deputy DBS Recruiter that they are unable to start the role until DBS clearance has been received. They are to be regarded as an 'occasional helper' whilst these **pre-appointment checks (section 8)** are being made. An occasional helper may offer additional support under the immediate supervision of the activity lead. When it is clear the occasional helpers volunteering commitment is increasing the responsible person should initiate the safer recruitment procedure.
- A **DBS check (section 9)** at some level is required for those who volunteer with children, young people and/or adults, and those who supervise those volunteers. Disclosure & Barring Service applications will be carried out through Thirtyone:eight prior to starting in any voluntary role as part of the safer recruitment process. The applicant will be assisted by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Lead DBS Recruiter) or Deputy DBS Recruiter with the DBS check application process. Details of the DBS check e.g. name of subject, date of issue, level of check, certificate reference number and position for which the disclosure was requested should be kept by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Lead DBS Recruiter). The DBS check must be renewed every 3 years. The level of DBS check should also be reviewed if the person's responsibilities change.
- Having a **criminal record (section 10)** does not necessarily prevent an individual volunteering with children, young people and/or adults. Criminal record information will be considered in line with policy for recruitment of ex-offenders. If any information is disclosed at this stage the Parish Safeguarding Officer **must** contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice on how to proceed, including what relevant confidential information can be shared with the PCC and how this should be recorded.
- Once DBS clearance has been received the **decision to appoint (section 11)** to a voluntary position is delegated to the responsible person. The PCC should be informed that the person has been appointed and approval must be recorded in the PCC minutes.
- Volunteers should receive a **letter of appointment (section 11) (appendix f)** from the PCC. The letter of appointment will include both the church's commitment to its volunteers and what it requests from them. Volunteers must complete a **volunteer agreement form (appendix e)**, completed forms should be returned to the responsible person. These forms must be stored securely in line with data protection requirements.

Step Four: Induction, supervision and training

- An **induction (section 12)** with the responsible person is required for roles working with children, young people and/or adults. It should include expectations in the role, objectives and arrangements for ongoing support as well as information about the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures, including how and whom to report concerns.
- A **probation/settling (section 13)** in period, usually 3 months, will take place so the volunteer and the group to which they have been assigned can see whether the volunteer is suited to the particular role.
- **Supervision (section 14)** as the role requires will take place with the responsible person. Safeguarding should form a core part of these ongoing meetings. The responsible person will conduct an **annual review (section 14)**. This is to ensure that volunteers feel supported and issues can be discussed and/or resolved.
- In line with **learning & development (section 15)** the volunteer will be assisted by the Parish Safeguarding Officer in completing Basic Awareness and Foundations safeguarding on-line training during the probation period. Further Diocese safeguarding training as required must be completed and all safeguarding training should be updated every three years.
- **Record keeping (section 16)** should include role details, personal details of the individual, e.g. name, address, date of birth. A written record of interview questions and answers should be kept. Records should be signed and dated by the responsible person. This information must be stored securely in line with data protection requirements.

A recruitment pack will be available on St Barnabas Church website containing:

Appendix a. Volunteer Role Description

Appendix b. Volunteer Application Form

Appendix c. Reference Request Form

Appendix d. Confidential Declaration Form

Appendix f. Volunteer Appointment Letter Template

Appendix e. Volunteer Agreement Template

Note: Those volunteering in church roles outside this remit are treated separately. Through St Barnabas Health & Safety Officer these volunteers should sign a Lone Worker Agreement and have been provided with a copy of the Portsmouth Diocese Lone Working Policy (2016), the Model Personal Risk Tool and St Barnabas Lone Workers & Risk Management Policy.

Version History

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1.0	040722	Guidance Created	CV – PSO/Lead DBS Recruiter JB – Deputy DBS Recruiter JC & DL - Church Wardens	St Barnabas PCC	210722	210723
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