

The Church of England - Birmingham Recruitment Policy for Parish Roles

This diocesan policy does not replace the national Safer Recruitment & People Management Guidance. Instead, it aims to assist parishes with appointments to roles that are not covered by the national policy.

1. Where a church body¹ appoints an individual to a role, post, or office as a volunteer, employee or office holder that falls under the scope of the Church of England's Safer Recruitment & People Management Guidance, these procedures must always be followed. Roles that fall under this guidance are those that have substantial² contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and/or responsibility for safeguarding.³
2. This policy applies to roles that fall under the scope of the Safer Recruitment & People Management guidance **and** a role, post or office as a volunteer, employee or office holder where an individual has been asked by a church body to regularly⁴ undertake responsibilities or 'tasks' on their behalf.
3. Before a church body asks an individual to regularly undertake responsibilities or tasks on its behalf the individual must:
 - have the approval of the incumbent/priest-in-charge, or Area Dean/church wardens in a vacancy, who is able to affirm they are a person of 'good standing'; and
 - have been a member of the faith community for a minimum of three months, however the incumbent/priest-in-charge can extend this period at their discretion.
4. Before an individual regularly undertakes responsibilities or tasks, the church body must ensure they have completed a short safeguarding induction that includes how to recognise and refer safeguarding concerns, the [Church of England's Code of Safer Working Practice](#) and any local guidelines relevant to the role⁵.

¹ Within The Church of England – Birmingham a church body will include, but is not limited to, a Parochial Church Council, an incumbent/priest-in-charge, a Bishop's Mission Order, a Proprietary Chapel, a Cathedral Chapter, a church plant.

² In practical terms, what is trying to be established here is a difference from "casual contact" of the type a shopkeeper would have with children and vulnerable adults. Shopkeepers are likely to come across all types of people whilst working in their shop. The fact that they might come into contact with the vulnerable would not be enough for them to be eligible for an enhanced check and the same principle should be applied to all roles. An enhanced check cannot be carried out just because a role might come into contact with a vulnerable person, (i.e. children or vulnerable adult). In the past, this has been referred to by Government officials in relation to eligibility as the "shopkeeper test".

³ A PCC can use their Safeguarding Hub to track compliance with these procedures for new appointments.

⁴ Regularly is more than three times in a year. An individual may have multiple roles that when considered together are undertaken more than three times in a year.

⁵ The Church of England – Birmingham has a range of safe practice leaflets on the Pathways Resource Hub - <https://birmingham.learn.anglican.org/mod/data/view.php?id=3613>

5. Where an individual has been appointed to a role, they are a church officer⁶ and must undertake the required level of safeguarding training for their role.⁷
 6. A church body must ask the individual to:
 - declare any unspent convictions and cautions; and
 - provide a reference from their previous minister where they have worshipped at another church, unless to do so would cause harm or distress to the individual, before asking them to undertake any responsibilities frequently⁸ or any responsibilities where they have a leadership role or responsibility for other individuals.
 7. Where the church body is aware that an individual:
 - is currently suspended – or would have been suspended if they had not left before a suspension could be affected - from another post, role or office within the Church of England;
 - is currently under investigation relating to a safeguarding concern; and
 - is currently under investigation for a complaint about their behaviour
 the church body must not allow the individual to undertake any responsibilities or tasks on their behalf and must report the information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
- A church body should consider asking an individual if any of the above apply to them, before any responsibilities are undertaken, where it is reasonable and proportionate in relation to the level of responsibility of the role.
8. Where an individual undertakes similar responsibilities or tasks peripatetically in more than one church – for example bellringers, musicians, organists – the church body must make enquiries with other churches to ensure they are of ‘good standing’.
 9. Where individuals from different organisations are asked to undertake responsibilities or tasks for an activity that is a collaboration between multiple organisations, for example in an oversight area:
 - one organisation must take overall responsibility for the activity and arrange insurance; and
 - the organisation with overall responsibility must seek confirmation from an individual’s incumbent/priest-in-charge/lead minister, or Area Dean/church warden in a vacancy, that:
 - the requirements of this policy have been followed for the individual; and
 - the individual has up to date DBS clearance and safeguarding training relevant to the role

⁶ The Church of England’s definition of a church officer is a person who has been appointed or elected to a role in the church, regardless of whether they are ordained or lay, or paid or unpaid.

⁷ The Church of England’s Safeguarding Learning & Development Framework sets out the level of training required - <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safeguarding-learning-and-development-framework> All church officers must complete Basic Awareness as a minimum.

⁸ Frequently is once a month or more often. An individual may have multiple roles that when considered together are undertaken once a month or more often.

10. Within five working days of the election of an individual to the office of church warden, an incumbent/priest-in-charge (or Area Dean in a period of vacancy) will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer of the name of the new church warden.
11. A new Church of England Confidential Self-Declaration Form must be completed each time an application for a Disclosure & Barring Service check is made – new and renewals. Where information is disclosed, the Confidential Self-Declaration Form must be sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
12. Where any information is disclosed that the individual has or may have caused harm, or their behaviours may have the potential to cause harm, this must be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.