

The Bybrook Team Ministry Safeguarding Policy (Children and Vulnerable Adults)

This Policy has been adopted by the Parochial Church Councils of each of the following parishes (each a “Parish”) within the Bybrook Team Ministry (the “Team”), part of the Chippenham Deanery in the Diocese of Bristol.

St. Nicholas, Biddestone

St. Michael and All Angels, Kingston St. Michael

St. Andrew, Castle Combe

St. Mary the Virgin, Grittleton

All Saints, Littleton Drew

St. Mary the Virgin, Nettleton & Burton

St James the Great, North Wraxall

St. Nicholas, Slaughterford

St. Mary the Virgin, West Kington

St Margaret, Yatton Keynell

In developing this safeguarding children and adults policy (this “Policy”) each Parish wishes to reflect that we are all in need of protection from harm and that as a Christian community it is the responsibility of every one of us to protect those less able to protect themselves.

Each Parish is committed to working within the Principles of the House of Bishop’s Policy for Safeguarding (contained within ‘Protecting All God’s Children’ 2010), the requirements of Working Together 2015, and the Care Act 2014.

Each Parish additionally commits to working within the National Church of England Safeguarding policies which can be found in the Safeguarding section of the Church of England website www.churchofengland.org:

“Protecting All God’s Children” 2010

“Promoting a safe church” 2006

“Responding Well” 2011

“Responding to Domestic Abuse” 2006

“Safer Recruitment” 2015

Each of the Parishes is committed to working individually and together to implement this Policy across the whole of the Team and to ensuring that, where church-led activities take place between multiple Parishes, this Policy is implemented in relation to those activities.

Safeguarding Policy Commitments

Pursuant to this Policy, each Parish is committed to:

- **The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all adults and children.**

This includes paying due regard to the beliefs and wishes of adults and children both when a safeguarding concern arises and in the development and delivery of church led activities including worship. This includes creating an environment in which people of all faiths and none are respected and where extremist views are not tolerated.

- **The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.**

The Parish will appoint one or more Parish Safeguarding Officers (“PSOs”) to work with the incumbent and the Parish to implement this Policy and associated procedures.

The PSOs will have the right to attend meetings of the PCC and the Team Council and will be requested to review and report, at least annually, on the implementation of this Policy, the procedures and good practice within the Parish.

- **The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of ‘informed vigilance’ as to the dangers of abuse.**

The safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk is everyone’s responsibility, not just parents, guardians and carers. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults at risk. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and prepared to report concerns and take actions if necessary.

The child’s welfare is the paramount consideration in matters of private and public law affecting children which come before the family courts. The Parish accepts and extends this principle in all areas of its work with children. Where conflicts of interest arise between the welfare of children and that of adults, it is the welfare of children that will be given priority.

- **We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of Disclosure and Barring Service disclosures.**

The Parish is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all volunteers and employees and follows the Church of England Safer Recruitment Policy 2015. The relevant vetting scheme is that of the Disclosure and Barring Service. The suitability of an applicant to work with children or adults at risk is never solely dependent on the outcome of a DBS check and the safer recruitment process set out in Schedule 1 of this Policy (the “Safer Recruitment Guidelines”) will be used to determine the suitability of a candidate for a role.

Those who work with children and/or adults, and those who supervise those workers, who are eligible for a DBS check will be required to undertake that check prior to starting in any role whether employed or voluntary within the Parish.

Those who are not eligible for a DBS check will be recruited in line with the Safer Recruitment Guidelines including the use of applications forms, references and interview where applicable.

Suitable induction, training and supervision will be provided to all those working with children and vulnerable adults.

In addition to the Safer Recruitment Guidelines, the Parish will also follow the principles and guidelines set out in Schedules 2 and 3 of this Policy (“Fair Recruitment of Ex-Offenders” and “Handling of Disclosure Information”).

• We will respond without delay to every concern raised which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.

The Parish accepts that it has responsibilities, through its workers, to take all reasonable steps to safeguard children and adults at risk when on church grounds, taking part in church led activities off site and when travelling between sites when organised by the Church. The Parish cannot be responsible for incidents or concerns arising outside of church or church led activities but will nevertheless endeavour to provide appropriate advice and to refer any concern raised to the appropriate authorities in order to ensure that the community as a whole is safeguarded appropriately.

The term ‘concern’ covers allegations, disclosures and/or complaints of a safeguarding nature; whether made in writing or verbally.

The Parish will utilise the process described in the Safeguarding Guidelines published by the Diocese of Bristol including ‘How to Make an Alert’ and the ‘Allegations Management Procedure’.

The Parish will maintain a clear line of accountability and structure for safeguarding which attributes roles and responsibilities to everyone within the life of the church.

• We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with him, or her, an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.

The Parish does not (and should not) investigate current allegations of abuse or harm of children itself but refers them to the appropriate statutory authorities for investigation in line with multi agency safeguarding children procedures. The Parish may complete internal investigations once statutory authorities have completed their own investigations.

The Parish will only investigate allegations of harm or abuse of a vulnerable adult where a statutory authority requests that this action is undertaken or where the allegation does not meet the criteria for a referral to police or Local Authority. The Parish may make information gathering inquiries in order to be able to present accurate information to the statutory authorities.

If it comes to the attention of the Parish that a child has experienced abuse in the past that information will be passed to the statutory authorities for their records and consideration.

If it comes to the attention of the Parish that an adult has experienced abuse in their past, the adult's wishes will be taken into consideration and that adult encouraged to report the matter to the statutory authorities. Where there is a reasonable belief that others may be at risk of harm the Parish will refer the matter to the statutory authorities within the guidance provided by the Data Protection Act 1998 (see 'information sharing guidance').

• **We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.**

The Parish is aware that those in positions of trust and responsibility, in the Church, as elsewhere, may be subject to temptation to abuse their power and exploit or harm others. We seek to take action to deal with any abuse.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to children (under 18) by church officers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), as well as other statutory bodies as appropriate, and investigated in accordance with his/her advice.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to adults (18 and over) by church officers will be referred to the police and/or Local Authority where appropriate and investigated in accordance with their advice. Where appropriate, allegations of this nature will be managed according to the Church of England "Risk Assessment" guidance and/or the appropriate disciplinary and/or complaint procedures.

- **We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.**

If a member of a church community comes to notice as having a conviction or caution for offences against children or vulnerable adults, or has been barred from working with children or vulnerable adults, or is considered a potential present risk to either group (for example if an allegation has been made but the outcome is as yet unknown) we will seek to implement a written agreement, where it is safe to do so in line with advice from the local Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements group (MAPPA) . The agreement will contain safeguards for the individual and children and/or adults at risk.

The Parish will work with statutory authorities where appropriate to ensure adequate risk assessment and management of any agreement and will have regard to the guidance set out in “Ministering to those who may Present a Risk” and “Risk Assessment” published by the Diocese of Bristol.

- **In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.**

Consequently this policy and all associated procedures and guidance will be regularly updated in order to reflect current legislation, guidance and best practice.

The Parish is committed to positive information sharing practice including: the appropriate seeking of consent to share; maintaining appropriate confidentiality; and the sharing of information internally and with statutory bodies. The Parish also undertakes to retain, store and destroy records in line with current best practice.

Schedule 1

Safer Recruitment Guidelines

POLICY STATEMENT

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of Disclosure and Barring Service disclosures.

The Parish is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all volunteers and employees. The relevant vetting scheme is that of the Disclosure and Barring Service. The suitability of an applicant to work with children or adults at risk is never solely

dependent on the outcome of a DBS check and the full safer recruitment process will be used to determine suitability of the candidate for the role.

Those who work with children and/ or vulnerable adults, and those who supervise those workers, who are eligible for a DBS check, will be required to undertake that check prior to starting in any role, whether employed or voluntary, within the Parish as part of a safer recruitment process.

Those who are not eligible for a DBS check will be recruited in line with safer recruitment practice including the use of application forms, references and interview where applicable.

Suitable induction, training and supervision will be provided to all those working with children and vulnerable adults.

POLICY CONTEXT

All recruitment of staff and volunteers and ministers to any post within the Parish must comply with the Church of England “Safer Recruitment Policy 2015”.

Failure to follow this policy in full may invalidate insurance cover, place children and adults at risk and constitute a reportable breach to the Charity Commission.

The following guidelines provide a summary of the overall policy and explain the provisions as relevant to the Parish. These guidelines must be read alongside the national policy.

WHAT IS SAFER RECRUITMENT?

The practice of ensuring that all paid and volunteer staff are recruited in a way that ensures those individuals have the values and skills to do the work we ask of them and that people who present a risk to vulnerable groups e.g. children or vulnerable adults, do not work with them.

One of the strengths of church is the coming together of people of all ages and backgrounds. However, where someone wants to cause harm this is also one of church’s weaknesses. By recruiting safely we meet our responsibilities to those we support to do all we can to ensure that those that lead, guide and work with the most vulnerable people are there to do good rather than to cause harm.

WHO RECRUITS WHO?

It is important to make sure that anyone having substantial contact with children and vulnerable adults within the church is safely recruited.

The process of recruiting all Parish staff and volunteers is the responsibility of the Vicar and the PCC. The process may be delegated to those responsible for specific areas of work and supported by the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The PCC must keep a record of who has been recruited. DBS checks for those going into eligible roles are to be undertaken within the Parish and records maintained there. The Parish must repeat DBS checks every 5 years for those in eligible roles.

The process of recruiting all Parish volunteers approved to administer the chalice or home communion is also the responsibility of the Incumbent and PCC. In addition, approval must be sought from the Diocesan Bishop.

WHERE TO START?

The Church of England “Safer Recruitment Policy June 2015” is the current Church of England policy and must be complied with in full. The policy explains how to recruit paid and volunteer staff safely.

Everyone within the Parish must follow this policy when recruiting any paid or volunteer staff.

Further information about who requires a DBS disclosure and the process can be obtained from the CCPAS Recruiters Guide - E Bulk System.

Template recruitment forms and letters can be found in the members area of the CCPAS website and are available from the Team office and from the Team Safeguarding Officer(s).

To summarise the process:

When recruiting staff or volunteers within the Parish, the following process is to be followed.

Who is recruiting?: Who is responsible for recruitment and who will be involved in the process needs to be clear from the outset. Individuals, who do not have the authority or skill to recruit, should not do so.

Start with the role: What do you need someone to do? Write down in a role description; what the person will do, where, when, and a person specification: what skills are needed?

Use the role description to decide: What recruitment process is required: application, interview, references? Is the role DBS check eligible? Ensure that the process is clear to applicants. Further

information on how to decide on the process can be found in the Church of England Safer Recruitment policy June 2015.

Advertise the role: Make it clear what the role is, what the application process is and whether the role is eligible for a DBS disclosure. This is your first chance to publically state your commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment. We know that those unsuitable to work with vulnerable people are far less likely to apply if they know from the outset that a DBS disclosure will be required and/or that references will be taken.

Application form: The aim is to find out why the person wants the role and what skills and experience they bring to it. What questions are asked on the form will depend on what the role is but where a role involves contact with vulnerable people it should always include:

- name, address and telephone number;
- qualifications and experience;
- employment history with an explanation for any gaps and reason for leaving;
- contact details of named referees;
- information (based on the job description and person specification) in support of the application for the role;
- a declaration that all the information contained in it is true and that the applicant agrees to a Disclosure check being carried out where eligible should the organisation wish to appoint them; and
- Date and signature box for applicant.

Interview: Depending on the role this could be informal or formal. The aim is to explore further the information on the application form. How can the person demonstrate their skills and experience, what support or training might they need? Check out any gaps in employment history.

Offer the role to successful person: Use an offer letter, which also explains the next steps (they must not start the role at this point!).

References: Take up references. What is required will depend on the role. Where the role is paid and/or involves substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults ensure that at least one referee is a person from outside of the church.

Obtaining references is an essential part of gathering information about the applicant. Ideally at least one reference should be from the current employer - or a previous employer if they are not currently working/volunteering. The reference request should include requests for the following information:

- Comments about the applicants' ability to perform the duties of the role (the job description and person specification / volunteer role profile should accompany the reference request);
- Comments about the applicants' attitude towards children / vulnerable adults and towards safeguarding generally; and
- Any further information that might give rise to concern, either about the applicants' attitudes, values or known practices.

Information given by the referee can then be compared with information provided by the applicant.

References should be followed up with a telephone call in order to verify their identity and to provide an opportunity to clarify any queries you may have. It also provides an opportunity to thank the referee for their time in completing the reference.

At least two references should be obtained. It is good practice to inform those applying to work for you that you reserve the right to telephone referees and to make contact with any previous employer if necessary, so that they are aware, and the rationale for this.

Decisions on appointment should be made using the details given in the written reference. You may therefore require a revised written reference following any clarification you have sought.

Where a reference is sought from an employer, this should be completed by a manager or personnel officer rather than a colleague, and sent on headed paper. Open references (such as those headed 'to whom it may concern') should not be accepted as these could be out of date and may give rise to questions about authenticity. It is typical for such references to be written as part of 'compromise agreements' following difficulties in the workplace.

It is always important to reserve the right to make any further character enquiries you consider necessary. For example, you might want to seek a reference from a previous place of worship even though details are not supplied by the applicant. In such cases, the applicant should be consulted.

Confidential Self Declaration: Where the role involves substantial work with children and /or vulnerable adults ask the person to complete a "Confidential Self Declaration". This can be requested at the application stage and placed by the applicant into a sealed envelope but should not be opened until the post has been offered subject to referencing and a DBS check if eligible.

Note: Where a post involves substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and other similar legislation. This means

special conditions apply. You are only allowed to ask questions about spent convictions and cautions where the role has substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults.

A self declaration can only be used for roles that do not have substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults where the questions are amended to ask for information about unspent cautions and convictions only. A question can be asked on the application form about any unspent cautions or convictions that an individual has if relevant.

The form should be returned to the person responsible for obtaining DBS disclosures in a sealed envelope. Any information on the form should be kept confidential and be discussed with the applicant. The applicant's consent should be sought before any information provided on the self declaration is shared with others. If consent is not given this may mean that the individual is not able to be recruited. The application process can be stopped at this point if the information disclosed means that the role is not suitable for the individual.

DBS Disclosure Application: For those applying for an eligible role: ask them to apply for a DBS disclosure. Follow the CCPAS Guidance for Recruiters.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer or delegated other person must record the outcome of the DBS disclosure including: Applicant name, date of birth, disclosure number and disclosure date. If any information is disclosed on the Disclosure certificate the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must be contacted with the applicants consent. If consent is not given the individual cannot proceed into the role.

Confirm in Role: The person must only be confirmed in role and start once the whole process is complete. This includes satisfactory references and DBS disclosure certificate having been seen and any risk assessment required having been completed.

The PCC must then be informed that the person has been recruited and this information must be recorded in the PCC minutes.

Decision not to appoint: Where a person is deemed not to be suitable for a role following references and a DBS disclosure having been obtained, the person must be informed in writing by the recruiter of the decision and the reasons for this.

After recruitment:

The process does not stop there!

DBS Renewal:

All staff and volunteers in eligible roles must apply for a new DBS Disclosure within 5 years of the last certificate.

A DBS certificate is not a clearance to work. It is closest in kind to an MOT certificate. All it says is what relevant information the police had on the day the certificate was issued. It is possible that an individual may receive a caution, conviction or other information may be held by police following a DBS certificate being issued. We may not find out about this unless either the individual tells us or we check again. By being clear that we do re-check every 5 years we encourage individuals to tell us about any convictions or cautions they obtain.

Probation and Review:

It is important that once a new staff member, including volunteers, is in post that they are supervised to ensure that they are coping with their new role.

Each individual should start on a probationary period. This is a period in which the individual can try out their role and the employer can ensure that the person they have recruited is working in the way expected. This is usually 3-6 months.

A review should happen at intervals e.g. 3 and 6 months and then annually.

Suitable induction, training and support should be offered during and after the probationary period. Any individual working with children and/or vulnerable adults must have basic safeguarding training during induction and attend a refresher course at least every 3 years.

Some roles will require additional or more advanced training. The provision of this induction and training is the responsibility of the employer.

Where an individual is not meeting the requirements of the role, this should be identified during the probationary period and a plan agreed with them to resolve the issues. This could be additional training, support or a change in tasks. Where the plan fails to resolve the issues an individual may fail to pass their probationary period and therefore be advised in writing that their employment (paid or voluntary) is terminated.

STAFF AND HELPERS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE:

Age of staff and volunteers: The minimum age for a worker is 16 as this is the minimum age for obtaining a DBS disclosure. It is essential that the level of maturity and experience of a person of

16 plus is assessed during the recruitment process. It would be usual to expect any person aged 16-18 to require supervision to work well and safely whilst they build their knowledge and experience (the same could be said of those 18+ entering a new role).

Where people under 16 assist in activities as helpers they should be supervised by another named worker and never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care of children. They must not be included in staff/child ratios.

Schedule 2

Fair Recruitment of Ex Offenders Policy

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, each of the Parishes within the Bybrook Team Ministry undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any unspent criminal record at an early stage in the application process.

Unless the nature of the position allows the Parish to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Where the nature of a position does allow us to ask questions about your entire criminal record excepting any "protected" information we will ask you to complete a "Self Disclosure Form" before

asking you to apply for a DBS disclosure. (Further information about what information should be disclosed is available from DBS in their 'DBS Filtering Guide'. This enables us to discuss with you at an early stage any information which may cause you to be unable to progress to confirmation in role. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the person within the organisation who is responsible for processing your DBS disclosure application and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.

Where a caution, conviction or additional information is disclosed by you or on a DBS disclosure your consent will be sought to forward a copy of the document to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA).

The DSA will make contact with you to discuss the information and the circumstances in which the caution, conviction or concern arose. The DSA may need to speak to statutory bodies or individuals and will seek your consent to do so. The DSA will provide a written risk assessment to the recruiter which includes a recommendation of safe to proceed, proceed with amendments to role or not safe to proceed. You will be provided with a copy of that assessment.

The recruiter will then communicate to you a decision regarding whether they are able to continue with the appointment process.

Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work. Failure to consent to risk assessment will result in any offer of employment or voluntary work being withdrawn.

Schedule 3

Handling of Disclosure Information

Storage and Access :DBS Disclosure Certificates (including any copies or downloads) must never be kept on an applicant's personal file. They must be stored separately in a secure, lockable, non-portable cabinet, with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling: In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. A record should be kept of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage: Disclosure information must only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given. A disclosure certificate must be for the correct workforce only and at the correct level. i.e. a person recruiting for a role in the child workforce at enhanced level should not ask to see a certificate for child and adult workforce at enhanced plus level as the certificate may include information that the recruiter is not entitled to see.

Retention: Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, a disclosure certificate (including any copies or downloads) should not be kept for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, consultation should be made with the umbrella body CCPAS. Advice can then be given regarding the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual. The above conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access would still apply in these circumstances.

Disposal: Once the retention period has lapsed, Disclosure certificates must be suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. shredding, pulping or burning. Whilst awaiting destruction, Disclosure certificates must not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). No copies of the Disclosure certificate may be kept, in any form. However, a record can be kept of the date of the issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the position for which the disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Policy approved February 2016, to be reviewed by the Team Council no later than end of February 2017