Thursday 28th October 2021

**‘Safer Recruitment and People Management 2021’ Briefing Paper**

**What is ‘Safer Recruitment and People Management 2021’?**

The Church of England’s safeguarding policy statement ‘Promoting a Safer Church’ outlines the Church’s commitment to promoting a safe environment and culture across all Church bodies for children and vulnerable adults. An essential part of this commitment is ensuring that all those who work or volunteer with vulnerable groups are suitable for the role they will carry out.

One way in which the Church aims to fulfil this commitment is by following ‘safer recruitment’ processes and ensuring continued vigilance once someone is in role. Obtaining a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Certificate is only one element of ‘safer recruitment’ processes. The reality is that many people who have abused or will abuse in positions of trust do not have a criminal record. Therefore, the wider process of ‘safer recruitment’ is an essential part of the Church of England’s approach to safeguarding.

Consequently, the National Safeguarding Team have reviewed its previous guidance, ‘Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment’ which was first published in 2015 and in July 2021 published its new policy and associated guidance, ‘Safer Recruitment and People Management’ (SR&PM). Whilst published in July 2021, the guidance can be immediately implemented although formal implementation is mandated for 4th January 2022.

**What does ‘Safer Recruitment and People Management 2021’ do?**

SR&PM goes beyond the previous ‘Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment’ (2015). The revisions made offer Church Bodies clarity and detail on key areas which have been consistently raised as areas of concern and confusion; for example, safer recruitment processes and procedures, DBS eligibility criteria and renewal periods, reference checking requirements and who the guidance applies to.

Whilst the ‘process’ of safer recruitment does not significantly change in the new guidance, its requirements are written in more mandatory terms, and it places more marked responsibilities upon parishes to create robust ‘safer recruitment’ processes. Consequently, it will have an impact on parish ‘safer recruitment’ and DBS activities.

Additionally, the most significant change arising from this new guidance is the requirement to carry out DBS checks on a three-year basis rather than on a five-year basis.

**Where can I access ‘Safer Recruitment and People Management 2021’ and what does it look like?**

[Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance | The Church of England](https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance)

The SR&PM guidance is provided solely in an e-manual format which can be accessed directly from the Church of England website. (See the link above). A link will also shortly be provided in the ‘Safer Recruitment and People Management’ section of the Safeguarding webpages of the Diocese of Bath and Wells website. The guidance exists solely as an online resource which will be updated regularly in accordance with law and policy changes. Each step of the guidance is broken down into three sections: 1. Requirements – these are the recruitment processes and activities which must be undertaken. 2. Good Practice Advice – provides supporting advice, explanation, or good practice ideas to help people in their delivery of the Requirements to a good standard. 3. Tool Kit – within each toolbox are draft templates which church settings can adapt so they do not need to create their own. The guidance has been developed as a ‘one stop shop’ resource and as such you will find most of the things you need located within it.

**Do I need to do anything?**

The short answer is yes, it’s very likely! If you are any of the following:

• A Line Manager

• Involved in the recruitment of Church Officers (employees, elected members, and volunteers)

• A Parish Safeguarding Representative or Safeguarding Officer in your church body

• Responsible for administering DBS checks

• An Ordinand during IME1

**You will need to:**

1. Read the guidance: Please make yourself familiar with its contents and implement them where, when and how you are required to do so. If you are based in parishes, you will need to ensure ‘Safer Recruitment and People Management’ is raised as an agenda item on the next PCC meeting so everyone involved in church life who needs to be is aware of the changes and so they can be implemented.

2. Complete the ‘Safer Recruitment’ e-learning module: To assist in the implementation of the guidance, an online ‘Safer Recruitment’ e-learning module has been developed. It is a simple and relatively short course that produces a certificate of completion that can be saved in an individual’s personal file as evidence of competency when involved in recruitment. The module is available on the National Safeguarding Training portal. A link is also available in the ‘Safer Recruitment and People Management’ section of the ‘Safeguarding’ webpages on the Diocese of Bath and Wells website. All those listed above are required to complete the module. It can also be completed by anyone else for whom it is deemed relevant.

3. Complete the ‘Safer Recruitment and People Management Assessment Tool’ Within the guidance itself there is a simple ‘Assessment Tool’ to help individuals and teams review and understand their current safer recruitment and people management practices and procedures. The tool easily identifies where there may be gaps in your processes. Parishes and other settings are encouraged to use this ‘audit’ prior to 2022 and remedy any gaps they may identify.

**What do I do about DBS checks?**

As outlined above, from January 2022 the Church of England require that all DBS checks must be renewed every three years rather than five years. Therefore, all those involved with the process of applying for new and renewal DBS checks will need to review the DBS checks they are responsible for and ensure these are renewed at the three-year point. If it suits your department/team/parish/church to start this process prior to 4th January 2022 please proceed as soon as you are free to do so. For those who require more planning, please note this process must start no later than 4th January 2022.

We have set out the schedule below which, if followed, should ensure the DBS renewals you are required to undertake are processed in a manageable pattern. This will be particularly useful for those with high numbers of DBS checks to bring up to date.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Original DBS Check completed in | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| Action Required | Renew as normal in 2022 | Renew as normal in 2023 | Renew by the end of 2023 | Will need to be renewed 3 years from issue date. | Will need to be renewed 3 years from issue date |

**This sounds like a lot – who do I contact for assistance?**

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