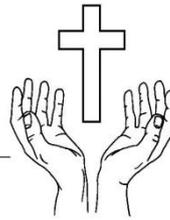


**Sharing God's Love**  
St Luke's, Brislington



# St Luke the Evangelist Brislington

A policy statement to ensure the safety and care of children and young people within our church.

At this time of vacancy please read Church Wardens for vicar.

# Youth Work at St Luke's.

2021 At present we have no youth work

Group	Leader	Location	Day and time
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## Youth groups that use church premises.

Pre School Group meet in the hall:- Local authority vetted and hold their own Child protection policy

Rainbows will meet in the hall from September 2021. Monday evenings 6-7pm. The Guide Association have their own child Protection Policies that they adhere to. All leaders are interviewed and have to hold a warrant to work with the group.

Any other Youth Groups which are independent to St Luke's Church should have their own Safeguarding policy.

<b>Contacts</b>	Parish Safeguarding Officer:	Rosemary Spada	07443854955
	Church Wardens	Gwyn Williams	07598755108
		Malcolm Thorne	07933383463

[We work in line with the Bristol Diocesan Safeguarding Policy.](http://www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/policies-and-procedures)

[www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/policies-and-procedures](http://www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/policies-and-procedures)

## Aims.

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As members of the church of St Luke the Evangelist Brislington, we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent any form of abuse of children and young people in our care.

We commit ourselves to prevent abuse of children and young people in our care and report any abuse discovered or suspected.

We are dedicated to providing the children in our care with a safe environment in which they can be introduced to and grow in the love of Jesus.

## **How we will achieve these aims.**

### **Procedures for Staff appointments.**

Appointment of staff either paid or voluntary will follow Diocesan guidelines. This PCC accepted the Diocesan policy for Fair Recruitment of Ex Offenders in 2014 and its policy for Safer Recruitment.

1. The Church Wardens with the leader of children's work will draw up a job description and what the job entails.  
Candidates will be sought either by advertising and/ or discrete enquires being made among suitable people. They will be given the job details to consider.
2. All people who work with children must complete a DBS disclosure, details of which will be given in the job application pack. There will be no cost involved to the individual.
  - a. The Parish of St Luke's is committed to the fair and sensitive use of Disclosure information and where an applicant feels that this has not happened an appeal process will be available, details of which can be obtained in writing from the Safeguarding Officer; PCC Secretary or from the Diocesan Office (First Floor, Hillside House, 1500 Parkway North, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8YU)
  - b. We are committed to the recognition of each individual's abilities, skills, experience and qualifications and will take every step to ensure that these are given appropriate weight and consideration in the appointment and recruitment process.
  - c. We will ensure that each paid post or volunteer position is assessed from the appropriateness of a DRB disclosure, that any advertisement or other indication of a paid post or volunteer position will indicate the level of Disclosure to be sought and that an offer of paid or volunteer position will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory Disclosure information.
  - d. We will request candidates for a paid or volunteer position to submit in writing any convictions or other disqualifying behaviour that might be revealed in the Disclosure process in order to assist the recruitment decision process. This information will only be taken into account when relevant to the post in question. It should be submitted in an envelope clearly marked 'Private and confidential' and handed to the person specifically identified for this purpose in the recruitment process.
  - e. All Evidence e.g. passport, driving licence etc. must be witnessed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer
  - f. We will expect renewal of DBS every five years in line with Diocesan guidelines.
- 3 The PCC should be notified of all appointments of volunteers and paid employees to positions within the church. All positions to be reviewed by PCC regularly.

## **Appeals and Complaints Procedure**

Although every effort is made to ensure that all recruitment decisions involving Disclosures are made sensitively and fairly, should an applicant for a paid post or a volunteer position feel that this has not happened the matter can be referred to the office of the Diocesan Secretary who will instigate an independent assessment of the issue in question.

The applicant should submit the appeal or complaint in writing, stating their name and address, the post or position applied for, the nature of the complaint or appeal, the date of the disclosure document, the identity of the person or appointing body responsible for making the appointment and any other relevant information.

## **Premises**

- 1 We will ensure that meeting rooms used are clean and safe for children.
- 2 A regular Health and Safety check will be made on the premises where children's groups meet and anything found to be unsafe will be noted and rectified.
- 3 Health and Safety rules will be displayed in the hall for all users.

## **Insurance.**

All church activities will be adequately insured, in respect of both the young people and leaders, through the Ecclesiastical Insurance Diocesan Youth Group Insurance Scheme. The Church Hall booking agents will ensure that all those who use the building (including those who hire the premises) know and are prepared to implement the policy.

## **Staffing and Resources**

- 1 Each group will have a minimum of two adults in attendance. **Supervision should be used as a means of protecting children.**
- 2 We will provide suitable teaching resources for our church children's work; the full cost being met by the church with the approval of the PCC.
- 3 Opportunities for training will be provided if approved by the PCC.
- 4 A nominated person or persons will be appointed by the PCC to undertake the role of Overseer of the Child Protection Policy. This will be an independent person who will share the responsibility of child protection with the clergy and the children's group leaders. The nominated person, known as the Parish Safeguarding Officer, should be the person to whom the children, young people and their leaders, may turn when they have concerns. The person should be familiar with the Child Protection Policy and procedures if an allegation or disclosure is made.

## **The Provision for the Review and Resourcing of the Policy.**

1. Provision for the safe upkeep of the premises, for the training of leaders and helpers and for the greater furtherance of this policy will be made by the PCC
2. The policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the PCC on behalf of the Church.

## **Procedures for the discovery or disclosure of abuse**

### **Purpose of document:**

The purpose of this document is to inform those working with children that some children do get abused and to advise them of the procedures to be carried out if abuse is disclosed to them, or if they suspect abuse. This will assist us in providing a secure environment for children.

First and most important – whether it is your first contact with suspected child abuse or not:-

- a. Ensure the welfare of the child
- b. Talk to someone, either another children's leader, the vicar or the PSO

Should you encounter any situation involving a child which gives you cause for concern:-

Make a written note of the conversation including any observations, date, time, name(s) and any other details.

Pass this written record immediately to your vicar, warden or PSO.

Do not be afraid to be wrong.

### **1. What is a child?**

Any person under the age of 18 years.

### **2. What is abuse?**

- a. Physical abuse – includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, administering poisonous substances, suffocating/ drowning, excessive force.
- b. Neglect – a failure to meet the basic essential needs of a child, or if a child is left unsupervised at a young age.
- c. Emotional abuse – children harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting, or ignoring the child.
- d. Sexual abuse – involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children or adolescents in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

N.B. A child may suffer more than one category of abuse.

- e. Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non related children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

### **3. Who abuses children?**

- a. Very rarely a stranger
- b. Often someone close to the child, e.g. parent, carer, baby sitter, sibling, relative or friend of the family
- c. Sometimes someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker, or (very sadly) a church worker/leader
- d. Sometimes, paedophiles and others who set out to join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children.

#### 4. How might we recognise abuse?

Warning signs: They are only a guide, they are not necessarily proof of abuse but may be an indication of:-

- a. Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- b. Nervousness/watchfulness.
- c. Sudden under achievement or lack of concentration.
- d. Changed or inappropriate relationships with peers and /or adults.
- e. Attention seeking behaviour.
- f. Persistent tiredness.
- g. Running away /stealing/lying.
- h. Self-harm.

#### Other areas where leaders should be vigilant are:-

- a. Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them. Or where differing explanations have been received.
- b. Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- c. Injuries and illnesses which have not received medical attention.
- d. Instances where children are kept away from the group or school inappropriately.
- e. Reluctance to change for, or participate in games or swimming.
- f. Any signs of neglect, undernourishment or inadequate care.
- g. Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- h. Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play.
- i. Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- j. Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- k. Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements at home.
- l. Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotation.

#### One or more warning signs may be evident.

Many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This, together with conflicting medical opinion, has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of sexual abuse.

**It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be considered far more than in the past. They should make us stop and think – not jump to conclusions inappropriately!**

#### 5. What to do if abuse is suspected.

- a. We have a responsibility: The Children's Act 1989 was brought out as a means to promote and protect the welfare of all children, and within the working together framework states that:

*"The community as a whole has a responsibility for the well being of children. This means that all citizens should remain alert to circumstances in which children may be harmed. Individuals can assist the statutory authorities by bringing cases to their attention. Relatives, friends and neighbours of children are particularly well placed to do so, but they must know what to do if they are concerned, in addition to providing*

*support for the family and child, which may include help caring for the child. They must also be confident, because of the difficult and sensitive nature of the situation, that any information they provide will be treated in a confidential way and used only to protect the interests of the child. They should know too that early action on their part is often the best way of helping a family stay together as well as protecting the child"*

b. The local Social Services note the following in their preamble when dealing with voluntary social work agencies involved with child care.

(i) Voluntary agency staff involved with families and children are likely to receive referrals/information/allegations or witness concerns suggestive of the need for child protection investigation under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act. **It is the responsibility of the voluntary agency to refer concerns to the Social Services department.**

(ii) The role of the voluntary agency in these circumstances, except in the case of medical emergency, is essentially to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegations, and provide information to the Social Services department, whose task it is to investigate under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act.

## 6. Responding to abuse.

### **If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect:**

Contact your Vicar or PSO

The PSO will:

a. Contact Social Services (or CCPAS) for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the child's safety. The parents should not be informed in these circumstances.

b. Where the PSO is unsure whether or not to refer the case to Social Services, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.

In cases where there is immediate concern for the safety of the child the PSO will call the police on 101.

### **If there are allegations of sexual abuse**

Contact your Vicar or PSO

The PSO will:

a. Contact Social Services or the police for advice. Do not speak to the parent (or anyone else) if there is a possibility that they could be involved. The fact that you may feel the child's story is unlikely must not prevent appropriate action being taken. *For example a child may say that he/she has been abused by an older young person. In reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.*

b. It is the responsibility of the church worker to pass on the possibility of abuse to the Social Services Department. The role of the church is essentially collecting and clarifying the precise details of the allegation and providing the information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the allegation.

### **Further guidance in responding to abuse:**

Whilst the church worker will normally consult with the church leader before reporting incidents/suspicions of child abuse to the Social Services Department, the absence of

the church leaders should not delay the referral. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the worker and the church leader as to the appropriateness of such a referral, the church worker nevertheless retains the right as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department.

All children's workers should be aware that any allegations or suspicions are covered by pastoral confidentiality, and that therefore church members have no rights to this information. The sharing of information is therefore limited to a need to know basis. This will protect the interests of all the parties concerned.

## **7. Third party/ anonymous referrals/allegations:**

### **Families not known to the church**

- a. In cases where allegations are made by a third party. The role of the church worker is to elicit as much information as possible from the referrer. Unless the person wishes to remain anonymous this should include the referrer's details ( name, address, telephone number) and as much factual detail as possible about the child and family concerned ( names of family members, address, name / date of birth of subject child, ethnic origin, etc). Information as to the cause of concern/nature of injuries/observations should be included.
- b. The church worker must inform the referrer that information relating to any child at risk, will be shared with their church leader and may result in referral to the Social Services Department. And in this event the Social Services Department may wish to interview the referrer (if known) as part of the child protection investigation.
- c. The church worker can then report the above information to the church leader and the latter will then seek the advice from the PCCA and then if there are sufficient concerns to make a referral to the social Services Department.

## **8. How should we react if a child tells us he/she has been abused?**

Children's workers are in a unique position and your relationship with children cannot be underestimated. Your group may be providing a safe haven and perhaps the only place where a child feels comfortable and able to talk to adults. It is therefore possible that a child may approach you to talk about abuse.

If a child discloses to you, you should make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what happened immediately beforehand (eg a description of activity). Record dates and times of these events of your recording. Keep all hand written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safe for an indefinite period of time.

Once a child has talked about abuse the worker or leader has to consider whether or not it is safe for the child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact social services and or police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

### **The following guidance may be of help**

- a. General points.
  - (i) Accept what the child says

- (ii) Keep calm, do not appear to be shocked
  - (iii) Look at the child directly
  - (iv) Be honest
  - (v) Tell the child that you will have to tell someone else - do not promise confidentiality.
  - (vi) Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
  - (vii) Be aware the child may have been threatened.
  - (viii) Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what the child said, including the child's name, age, address, relevant family information, and details of the situation and the activity that preceded the disclosure.
  - (ix) Never push for information or question the child.
- b. Helpful things to say
- (i) I believe you
  - (ii) I am glad that you have told me
  - (iii) It's not your fault
  - (iv) I will try to help you.
- c. Avoid saying
- (i) Why didn't you tell anyone before?
  - (ii) I can't believe it.
  - (iii) Are you sure this is true.
  - (iv) Why? How? When? Where?
  - (v) Never make false promises.
  - (vi) Never make statements such as "I'm shocked, don't tell anyone else."
- d. Concluding
- (i) Again reassure the child they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
  - (ii) Let the child know what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens.
  - (iii) Immediately refer to the PSO person or the vicar.

Even if abuse is no longer happening it is still important to report the matter as the adult may be abusing other children. Also it may be that the child will need guidance and help in overcoming the effects of the abuse, plus the police may wish to prosecute.

## **Practicalities for mutual protection of leaders and children involved in children's work**

### **1. Guidance.**

- a. Avoid being on your own with any child. This may mean groups working in one large room, or adjoining rooms.
- b. Never take a child home on your own – preferably have another helper with you. Or else ensure that the last two children are dropped off together.  
( Remember an allegation could also be made against you)
- c. Be wise in your physical contact with children do not be over friendly with some at the expense of others. No favourites.
- d. Male helpers need to be particularly careful in what they say, and in being around forward young females. Female helpers similarly need to be careful with forward male children.
- e. Never smack, hit or physically discipline a child except by holding which may be used if there is an immediate danger of personal injury to the child or another person.
- f. If you feel that a child may have a crush on you, pray about it and talk to the PSO or the vicar for advice and guidance.
- g. In order to help children we need to develop healthy relationships by listening to them and respecting them.
- h. We must be mindful of the safety of children at all times and in all circumstances.
- i. Whenever possible have two adults present with each group particularly when it is the only activity taking place in the building and do not take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults.
- j. Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling a young person) ensure that others know that the interview is taking place and that someone else is around the building.
- k. Prayer works and helps in each circumstance.
- l. When contacting a child by email or social media copy in the parents, or PSO.

### **2 Boundaries**

- a The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) appropriate and related to the age of the child – accepting that some children have special needs.
- b Guidance on touch. For example, physical contact between adults and children can be quite healthy and to be encouraged in public places but discouraged in circumstances where an adult/ child is on their own
- c Workers should treat all children/ young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.
- d Respect the privacy of children, avoid questionable activities (e.g. rough/sexually provocative games and comments)
- e If you invite a child to your home, ensure another adult is present and the parent is aware.
- f If transporting a child on their own then it is better for the child to sit in the back seat.

### **3 Feedback**

- a It should be accepted that anyone seeing another worker acting in a way that could be misinterpreted should be able to speak to the individual or the PSO about the concern.
- b Regular workers to review procedures to ensure common approach, sharing concerns and identifying other matters which may need clarification and guidance.



### Acknowledgments

This document is based mainly on a model child Protection Policy supplied by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service – a project of the PCCA Child Care and the Draft Child Protection Policy for Parishes included in the Safe and Sound Document of the Diocese of Bristol.

A copy of the policy and all amendments will be filed with the CCPAS. This policy must not be copied by other churches without the written agreement of CCPAS.

First Update August 2010.

(further minor personnel details and addresses updated November 2012)

(Policy reviewed and updated personnel details July 2014)

(Policy reviewed and updated January 2018)

Updated 2021

The PCC attended Safeguarding Training 1 in September 2015 with updating since

The Church Wardens have attended Safeguard Training 2

In line with renewed Diocesan Safeguarding Policy all PCC members are now DBS checked and renewals that come due this year will be achieved..

Updated Acts have been passed since the Children's ACT OF 1989.

Church Policy.

Protecting All God's Children 2010.

Promoting a Safer Church 2006

Safer Recruitment 2015

Responding to domestic abuse 2006

Responding well: to those who have been sexually abused 2011.

Diocesan Policy.

Diocese of Bristol policy and guidance: [www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/policies-and-procedures](http://www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/policies-and-procedures).

Appendix 1.

Taken from PCC Minutes of October 2017

[17/62 Attachment.](#)



Last updated July 2015 V.2

## Diocese of Bristol 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 Diocese of Bristol is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all licenced ministers, 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 Diocese of Bristol 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 applications 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, volunteers and ministers to any post within the Church of England 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 Diocese of Bristol. 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 churches 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.

For all lay staff and volunteers refer to the following:

### **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 Diocese of Bristol 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 "Safer Recruitment Policy 2015". Additional advice and alternative templates are available through the CCPAS website in the members area. Each parish will receive a log in to the site once a person has been nominated to use the CCPAS DBS system and has attended training and been registered with CCPAS.

Every organisation involved in recruitment and using DBS disclosures must have policies on Fair Recruitment of Ex Offenders and on the Handling of Disclosure Information. Both can be found, for the Diocese of Bristol, on the diocesan website. Each parish/organisation must ensure that they have their own versions of these policies in place when recruiting if using DBS disclosures.

The Charity Commission and insurers expect that everyone in an eligible role has a current DBS disclosure in place. Failure to ensure that this is the case has the potential to breach Charity Commission rules and to invalidate insurance policies. PCC's are recommended to ensure that they have adequate systems in place to monitor this effectively.

### **To summarise the process:**

**Who is recruiting?:** Be clear about who is responsible for recruitment and who will be involved in the process (in churches the process falls down when individuals decide to recruit without having the authority or skill to do this).

**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.
- 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 it provides 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, having sought any clarification you may therefore require a revised written reference.

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.

It is important that the organisation has a policy regarding the employment of those with a criminal record. Information disclosed on a confidential self disclosure or DBS disclosure should undergo risk assessment to determine whether the individual is able to progress in the application process. For the Diocese of Bristol this information is contained in the Fair Recruitment of Ex Offenders policy.

**DBS Disclosure Application:** For those applying for an eligible role: ask them to apply for a DBS disclosure. All DBS applications in the Diocese of Bristol are processed online via CCPAS. Each parish will need to recruit one or more individuals to be registered with CCPAS as Lead Recruiter/s (manage the DBS process including applications, ID check and recording results). This can operate on a team or benefice basis if preferred. Additionally Recruiters may be nominated (ID check only). Lead Recruiters and anyone leading a recruitment process should attend Safer Recruitment/ DBS training.

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 applicant's consent. If consent is not given the individual can not proceed into the role.

**Note DBS Updates:** The DBS provides a service called 'Updates'. Applicants may register for this service. It is free for volunteers but has an annual charge for paid staff. The Diocese of Bristol does not pay the annual fee for paid staff. PCC's may choose to accept 'Updates' so long as the service is used in line with the Church of England Safer Recruitment Policy 2015. However the Diocese of Bristol will not be notified when a disclosure is obtained via the 'Updates' service and parishes are therefore advised to ensure that the date the service was used, the outcome, and the certificate number, date and type checked are recorded within the parish for future reference.

**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:**

It is Church of England policy that all staff and volunteers in eligible roles and those holding a Bishop's licence 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.

## Appendix 2..Diocesan policy for Fair Recruitment of Ex Offenders

Last Updated July 2016 V3



Diocese of Bristol

### Recruitment of Ex Offenders policy

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the Diocese of Bristol 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 Diocese of Bristol 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', <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/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 Team (DST).

The DST will make contact with you to discuss the information and the circumstances in which the caution, conviction or concern arose. The DST may need to speak to statutory bodies or individuals and will seek your consent to do so. The DST 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.

This policy stands for all staff and volunteers recruited by the Bristol Diocese Board of Finance, all those holding a Bishops Licence, commission or permission and those employed by the Diocesan Bishop and candidates for BAP and Ordination.

This policy does not apply to staff and volunteers recruited by parishes, Bristol Cathedral or other organisations within the Diocese of Bristol. Each of these needs to confirm that they have adopted their own version of this policy prior to accessing the CCPAS E bulk DBS system provided through BDBF.

### **Quality Assurance and Appeals:**

In order to ensure that this process is followed according to Church of England agreed policy and practice (see National Church of England [‘Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for individuals who may pose risk to children or adults’](#) June 2015) the Diocesan Secretary as Bishops Staff Safeguarding Lead will be made aware of all risk assessments conducted within this process.

Should the individual subject to this process feel that they have been treated unfairly or that the process is contradictory to Church of England practice guidance, they may appeal.

The individual subject to risk assessment states in writing that they wish to appeal. If the individual initially states verbally that they wish to appeal they may be assisted by any party in producing a letter stating their reason for appeal.

- Independent Chair of Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group (DSSG) notified of appeal. (Write to: Independent Chair, DSSG, Diocese of Bristol, Hillside House, 1500 Parkway North, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8YU)
- Independent Chair identifies panel of three individuals taken from DSSG membership (not to include Diocesan Secretary).
- Individual subject to assessment is invited to submit any documents or a statement to the Independent Chair that they wish to be considered by the panel.
- DST provides Independent Chair with anonymised material (investigation report/ risk assessment/ agreement/ action plan dependent on case).
- Independent Chair reviews and forwards anonymised material to the individuals on the panel. Chair will request any additional information required from individual subject to risk assessment or the DST or others.
- Panel members individually review material.
- Independent Chair convenes a panel meeting in person or by teleconference at which the appeal and information submitted are considered.
- The panel will consider the information submitted alongside the guidance ‘Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for individuals who may pose risk to children or adults’ June 2015 and any other relevant Church of England policy or guidance and any legislation relevant. The panel will then reach one of the following conclusions:

1. The meeting is adjourned, either whilst additional information is obtained or for consideration.
2. The appeal has no grounds and is therefore dismissed
3. The appeal has grounds and recommendations are made for amendments to the implementation of the risk management plan or agreement.
4. There has been a breach of relevant policy or poor professional practice- in which case a recommendation may be made to the relevant line manager for appropriate procedures to be followed.

The individual subject to investigation, the DST and the commissioning body will be informed of the panel's decision in writing. The Commissioning body will then be responsible for considering, with support of the DST any panel recommendations.

Report made to Bishop and to next DSSG with case summary, panel recommendations and actions taken.



## Parish of St Luke's Brislington

### Safeguarding Recording Form - Private and Confidential

This form is to be used within a parish when a concern is raised or disclosure is given. The form should be started and kept up to date by the Parish Safeguarding Officer and kept in a safe and secure location. The form can be typed or written as required.

**Section 4** should be kept up to date to provide a record of activity and actions taken.

If you require advice regarding the use of this form please contact the Diocese Safeguarding Team, Tel: 0117 9060100 ([safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org))

Please fill in as many details as possible

#### Section 1: Who is this record about?

Details of the person you are concerned about:			
Is this person the alleged victim or the alleged perpetrator:		Victim <input type="checkbox"/>	Perpetrator <input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide as much information about the person about whom you are concerned.			
Subject of concern is an:	Adult <input type="checkbox"/>	Child <input type="checkbox"/>	Gender Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/>
Surname:		Forenames:	
If the person is a child please provide their parent/carers details if known:			
Surname:		Forename:	
Address:		Postcode:	
Telephone number:		Email:	
Surname:		Forename:	
Address:		Postcode:	
Telephone number:		Email:	
Have the parents/ carers been notified of this incident?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If <b>Yes</b> please provide details of what was said and what if any action has been agreed:			
If <b>No</b> please explain why the child's parents haven't been informed:			

**Section 2 – What is this record about?**

Details of the disclosure/incident			
Time and date of disclosure/ incident:	Time:		Date:
<b>Name and contact details of person making the disclosure/ reporting the incident:</b>			
Surname:		Forenames:	
Address:			Postcode:
Telephone number:		Email:	
Location of disclosure/ incident:			
<b>Names of anyone else (witnesses) who was present:</b>			
Position if any within the Parish/ Church:			
Surname:		Forename:	
Address:			Postcode:
Telephone number:		Email:	
<b>Record of disclosure/incident</b> ( <i>attach any notes made by others regarding the disclosure/Incident</i> )			
Has a previous referral been made:	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Name of agencies involved already:	
Have you informed the DSA?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Time/Date of Discussion:	
Who else have you spoken to:			
Your name:			
Your contact number:			
Your role:			
Signed:			Date:

**Section 3 – Who else has been contacted?**

Onward referrals and external agency involvement			
External referral made:	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Time:		Date:
With consent:	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> (If No please give reason)		
Referral form sent?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> (Attach a copy of the referral form if used)		
Name of social worker/ police officer/ team:			
Telephone number:			
Outcome of referral to external agency:	NFA <input type="checkbox"/>	ongoing enquiries <input type="checkbox"/>	open case <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Action taken:			
Details of support offered:			
Name of person in the parish dealing with this referral:			
Signed:		Date:	

