

May 2025

Hertford St Andrew Safer Recruitment Policy (including the recruitment of ex-offenders)

This Policy and Procedure was adopted at a
Parochial Church Council meeting held on May 12th 2025

Rev. Alan Stewart

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Declaration of Policy

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY PARISH OF HERTFORD ST ANDREW

The PCC has agreed and adopted the following Policy on Safer Recruitment (which includes the recruitment of ex-offenders).

Hertford St Andrew is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults, and the care and nurture of children within our church community. We will carefully select, train and support all those with any responsibility within the church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles.

This means that we will:

- Ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent those who might harm children or adults from taking up, in our church, positions of respect, responsibility or authority where they are trusted by others. A copy of St Andrew's Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy is kept in the church office.
- Adhere to safer recruitment legislation, guidance and standards, responding positively to changing understandings of good safer recruitment practice.
- Ensure that all paid staff and volunteers working with vulnerable children and adults will have completed the DBS disclosure as required by the Diocese of St Albans and its umbrella organisation thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS) (see www.stalbans.anglican.org/ and www.thirtyoneeight.org)

Hertford St Andrew:

- Are committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- Actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.
- Select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

The recruitment process

1.1 We adhere to the Church of England House of Bishops Safeguarding Guidance, in particular the chapter 'Safer Recruitment and People Management' (2021) which is found in the Safeguarding e-manual on both the Diocese of St Albans and the Church of England website.

1.2 The appointment of paid workers and volunteers is the responsibility of the Churchwardens and PCC. Responsibility for the recruitment process can be delegated but it is important that the person to whom it is delegated is capable, competent and trained in safer recruitment and is also able to keep personal matters confidential.

1.3 In the case of a paid position, a formal job description / person specification, which sets out what tasks the applicant will do and what skills are required, will be provided. For a voluntary position a verbal description of the role will be given. The formal job description or verbal description will also say whether a criminal records check (DBS, standard or enhanced) is required. It is a criminal offence for an individual who is barred from working with vulnerable groups to apply for a regulated activity and it is a criminal offence for an organisation to appoint a barred person to a regulated activity role.

1.4 An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

1.5 Every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS is made aware of the existence of the DBS code of practice. A copy is available on request.

1.6 For a paid role, applicants will be required to fill in an application form and to provide two references. References will be taken up prior to a job offer.

1.7 At the start of the recruitment process, where an individual is going to work or volunteer with vulnerable people, they will be asked to complete a 'Confidential Declaration' which, in broad summary, asks if there is any reason why they should not be working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect. If any applicant discloses information in the Confidential Declaration, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor must be contacted. Should the applicant not wish to complete the Confidential Declaration, which is entirely their choice, the application must not proceed further and must be terminated.

Interview/ discussion

2.1 There will be a face-to-face interview or discussion with pre-planned and clear questions to assess a person's suitability for a role. The interview will include questions about an applicant's values; if relevant, their attitude to working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and their motives for wanting to engage in such work. Additional questions can be asked for clarification purposes as necessary.

2.2 The applicant will be asked if they know of any reason why they should not be working with children or adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, or if there are any pending cases/issues which could affect them or their ability to carry out the role. If the applicant discloses any matter during the interview that relates to children and/or adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and which may affect the applicant's suitability for the role, then this must be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice.

2.3 In paid roles (and sometimes in volunteering roles) the candidate's identity will need to be checked by asking them to bring photographic ID as well as evidence of their relevant qualifications.

2.4 If the interview panel wish to appoint the applicant the appropriate criminal record check must be carried out. Should the applicant not wish to apply for a criminal record check, which is entirely their choice, the application must not proceed further and must be terminated.

2.5 The decision to appoint to voluntary or paid work must be made only by those who have that responsibility (see paragraph 1.2 above). The start date or appointment must not be confirmed until the relevant criminal record check is received and examined. The criminal record checks are received and examined by the DBS administrator. Criminal record checks that are not clear (i.e. which contain information of, for instance, criminal convictions or cautions or additional information such as arrests) must always be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice.

2.6 All paid posts will receive a letter of appointment. Included with the appointment letter will be copies of:

- St Andrews Safeguarding Policy
- Diocese of St Albans Best Practice Guidelines for working with children and vulnerable adults
- How to report a concern flowchart

Induction

3.1 Employees or volunteers whose roles involve working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect must receive relevant safeguarding training from the Diocese after starting their role, regardless of previous experience. They must also attend regular updates every three years.

Probationary/ settling-in period

4.1 There will be a six-month probationary period for any paid role or a settling-in period for volunteers when the volunteer and the organisation can see whether the volunteer is suited to the particular role. During these periods relevant training will be planned and any necessary support will be arranged. In addition, regular meetings with the supervisor will be organised to discuss any issues etc. that arise. For paid roles, at the end of the probationary period, a person's role must be confirmed in writing.

Supervision and regular review

5.1 All paid posts will be subject to management, supervision and appraisal.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

Hertford St Andrew:

- Undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that they are legally entitled to know about; where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended).
- Can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.
- Makes applicants aware of our Recruitment Policy, which includes the recruitment of ex-offenders.
- Ensures that guidance and advice is always sought from the Diocese of St Albans Safeguarding Team
- Ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- Also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- Undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.