

POLICY STATEMENT: RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

As a registered umbrella body, the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) acts on behalf of parishes within the diocese to enable Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) to have access to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) where the posts of parish workers require a CRB Disclosure.

The DBF complies with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Individual PCCs are responsible for recruitment decisions within their own parishes (the majority of those working with children hold voluntary positions, although there are some paid posts). PCCs agree to comply with diocesan guidance and recommendations in accordance with the Parish Agreement.

PCCs are encouraged to adopt sound recruitment procedures and guidance is available through national and diocesan church publications and training events under the auspices of the Bishop's Adviser in Child Protection.

Should information about offences be revealed through the Disclosure process, a rigorous risk assessment is conducted by the diocesan Risk Assessment Group before a recommendation is made to the PCC regarding recruitment.

For those positions where a Disclosure is required, application forms, job adverts and recruitment information indicate that the post is subject to obtaining a CRB Disclosure.

Applicants are encouraged to complete a "Self-declaration form" wherever appropriate and to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Such information should be sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within the appointing body (eg. the Vicar). This information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows the PCC (or DBF) to ask questions about an applicant's entire criminal record, only questions about "unspent" convictions, as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974), are asked.

Having a Criminal Record is not necessarily a bar to an appointment in a parish, although this depends on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the position involved.

