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**Recruitment and Selection Policy & Guidance**

for

----------------------------------- Methodist Church

To be read alongside:

**Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance January 2024** **Edition – produced by the Methodist Church.** This can be found on the MCIB website under ‘safeguarding – policies and guidance’ or by following this[link.](https://www.sheffieldcircuit.org.uk/lib/F829515.docx)

Adopted by the Church Council on --------------------

To be reviewed annually

**Introduction**

For most people, the Methodist Church is a safe place free of any form of physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual or psychological danger. It is a place where children, young people and vulnerable adults are free from harm, discrimination and other harmful influences.

Sadly, for some members of the Church family, their experience has been of not being safe and this broken trust has left them physically and/or psychologically harmed. This Safer Recruitment Policy makes clear our Church’s commitment to establishing a worshipping and serving community that welcomes and is safe for all.

This policy sets out the necessary actions that the Church needs to implement in its recruitment and selection procedures in order to identify and deter people who are a potential risk to children or vulnerable adults.

Safer Recruitment is more than the undertaking of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. It is about promoting and exercising a safe culture including the supervision and oversight of those who work with children and vulnerable adults.

However, even the most robust selection and recruitment policy and procedures cannot eliminate every risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. That is why safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. We must make it as difficult as possible for abusers to obtain access to children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is for this reason that once an individual is appointed, whether paid or unpaid, effective oversight arrangements are in place to monitor and respond to any concerns that emerge.

**Responsibilities for Safer Recruitment in the Methodist Church**

The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church sets out how Church Councils hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding including safer recruitment of all volunteers and employees in their environments. All churches are required to have their own safeguarding policy, which includes a commitment to implementing safer recruitment practices. It is part of the role of safeguarding officers, acting on behalf of each of those bodies, to promote and support safe recruitment.

If …………….Methodist Church intends to employ someone in a paid role for a specific position, then then we agree to follow the guidance in the Connexional Recruitment Policy. In the Sheffield Circuit always consult the District Lay Employment Secretary for advice.

……………… Methodist Church commits to following the ‘12 Steps to Safer Recruitment’, as outlined below when recruiting both volunteers and lay employees, as a means of ensuring that recruitment decisions are made with care and particular reference to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

**The Twelve Steps to Safer Recruitment**

**These steps refer to voluntary posts and lay employees, however additional steps are required for paid posts therefore it is essential that the District Lay Employment Secretary is consulted.**

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| Step 1 | Produce an up-to-date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process. *This document fulfils this requirement*. |
| Step 2 | Ensure there is a **Church** **Safeguarding policy**, which is reviewed annually and includes a commitment to Safer Recruitment.  ……………………………………Methodist Church has a Safeguarding Policy in place, last reviewed on …………………… |

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| Step 3 | Create a Role Outline for a volunteer post or a Job Description and Person Specification for a paid post.  There is now a single volunteer application form. The form can be found [here](https://www.sheffieldcircuit.org.uk/lib/F829515.docx), and on the Methodist Church website. **All** sections of the form must be completed by all prospective volunteers, whether or not the role they are applying for meets the criteria for an Enhanced DBS check. The form incorporates the Safeguarding Declaration form and the Privacy Notice.  A role outline must be produced, see step 3 additional guidance.  Always ask the district or circuit safeguarding officer if you are unsure whether a role requires a DBS check.  For person specifications for a paid role, please contact the District Lay Employment Secretary. |
| Step 4 | Advertise the role in a manner appropriate to the vacancy. |
| Step 5 | Produce an information pack.  Please see further notes on what should be included, and always check with your church safeguarding officer. |
| Step 6 | Consider each application fairly and carefully. |
| Step 7 | Carry out appropriate checks as required. Remember that referencesare important for volunteers as well as for paid roles. |
| Step 8 | If you need to short list candidates then make sure they are treated fairly. For volunteers make sure that if there is more than one interested person, that you explain to any unsuccessful candidates why they weren’t chosen for the role on this occasion. |
| Step 9 | Interview Candidates.  This will include a formal interview for a paid role. However for a volunteer post it is usually more appropriate to have a more informal discussion perhaps over a coffee. |
| Step 10 | Make sure that you use your list of questions to ensure you gain all the information you need to make the right decision about each candidate. |
| Step 11 | Select a preferred candidate based upon their suitability for the role. |
| Step 12 | Contact both the successful and the unsuccessful candidates. |

**Additional Guidance**

Step 3 – Role Outline

Write a Volunteer Role Description which outlines the tasks involved, and an approximate indication of how long each of these tasks would take. Setting limits is important as it helps prevent volunteers being asked to do too much, or being given extra tasks at a later date. You should also include who will supervise the volunteer and how they will be supported. Agree on things like milage expenses and any training requirements. There are examples of role descriptions on the Circuit website.

The Circuit is in the process of adding a list of further job descriptions to the website. Include the necessary skills and qualities required by the volunteer which could include punctuality, flexibility, good listener, able to work as part of a team.

A note on unconscious bias

Unconscious bias occurs when people favour others who look like them and/or share their values. For example, a person may be drawn to someone with a similar educational background, from the same area, or who is the same colour or ethnicity as them.

When writing a job description / person specification/ role outline for an established role, which has become vacant, take a step back from the existing staff member or volunteer and depersonalise the process. It is all too easy to characterise the position in terms of a particular individual’s age, education and qualifications.

Step 4 – Advertising

Volunteer roles should be advertised in a manner appropriate to the vacancy. Ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to come forward and who to speak to if they are interested. This could be on the church noticeboard, via a bulletin, online or highlighted during verbal notices at a service. The District Lay Employment secretary will offer advice on how to advertise a paid role.

Step 5 – Information Pack

As a minimum the Information Pack should contain:

* Church Safeguarding Policy including Safeguarding Statement
* Safeguarding Application Form, including Confidential Declaration Form & Privacy Notice.
* Role outline

Your church safeguarding officer should be able to advise you on any other forms you may need, including Key Holder Declaration Form D and the Lone Working Policy.

Step 6 – Shortlisting

Scrutinise each application carefully and fairly with reference to the criteria for the role before carrying out interviews or discussions with candidates.

A note on the importance of selection and screening of volunteers

Every year thousands of people volunteer. Almost without exception these volunteers are keen to give up their time and efforts simply because it helps others. However, just because most volunteers act selflessly it doesn’t mean that volunteers don’t need to be screened.

Lack of care in accepting volunteers can lead to dissatisfaction and disappointment for both the volunteer and your church. In a very small number of cases, lack of care in selection could lead to serious problems.

Good selection procedures recognise that the vast majority of volunteers deserve our best efforts to find suitable opportunities for them while also protecting vulnerable people.

Successful first contact with volunteers

Once you’ve started advertising your opportunities, you’ll start receiving responses from volunteers. How you respond to those enquiries is essential.

From the volunteer’s point of view, they’re offering you a gift – their time for nothing – so if you’re slow to respond, unenthusiastic or unwelcoming you risk seeming ungrateful.

Top tips for responding to volunteer queries

* You need to respond quickly to any expression of interest from a volunteer. If there is a delay in response, apologise and explain why you didn’t reply immediately.
* Initial contact needs to be friendly, welcoming and enthusiastic.
* The person responding to volunteers needs to be well informed, approachable, able to answer questions and prepared to tell volunteers what will happen next.
* Answer all volunteer questions fully and give volunteers all the information they need to make an informed decision. Your goal is to give the volunteers the opportunity to get involved or move on if the role is not right for them. It may be best to do this in person or over the telephone rather than sending written information so that volunteers will have the opportunity to ask questions.
* Explain any screening and selection procedures (e.g. references or DBS checks) what is involved, what information will be needed and why you need to screen volunteers.

Step 7 – Appropriate Checks

If a role requires safeguarding training it would be wise to liaise with the church safeguarding officer to check if the candidate has done training in the past 4 years. If they haven’t, this is something volunteers should be made aware of BEFORE taking up the role. If the role requires a DBS check this must also be done before taking up the role. For roles that don’t require a DBS check, an identity check should be done. Remember that references are also required for volunteer roles as well as for paid roles.

Step 8 – Treating People Fairly

If several people are shortlisted for a post its important that all are treated fairly and with respect. If you have a candidate who is visually impaired for example, you will need to consider how you will supply them with the same information as other applicants.

The Methodist Church is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons when developing, co-ordinating and supporting volunteering. Although there is no statutory obligation under equality legislation we recognise a clear moral obligation to promote fairness and equality in volunteering and value all individuals and their diverse & unique identity and backgrounds.

Step 9 & 10– Face to face interviews or discussions

There is a temptation to simply accept a volunteer because they have come forwards and a role desperately needs filling. It is important however, that an honest conversation takes place so that expectations can be managed and any potential issues identified. Having a conversation before starting a role can prevent much frustration and bad feelings in the future.

For example, imagine your church is looking for new Service Stewards. Someone seemingly perfect comes forwards and they are quickly nominated and approved. As the Senior Steward you notice after several months that the new person never offers to cover funerals, and other stewards start to complain that they are doing more than their fair share. You speak to the new Steward about this and at this point they tell you they care for their grandchild 5 days a week and are never available apart from weekends.

If this issue had been identified and explored prior to them being appointed their availability would never have been an issue.

Disclosure & Barring Check (DBS)

Once the successful candidate has been chosen they need to complete any outstanding paperwork in their Information pack. For some this means obtaining a DBS check if the role requires one. The Confidential Declaration in part B of the form provides the applicant with the opportunity to declare any relevant issues prior to a criminal record check. It gives the applicant a chance to discuss any matters of relevance before starting the DBS process, and may help to reduce embarrassment if issues of concern arise which could affect the likelihood of their acceptance for a particular role. On occasion, when applicants become aware of the full extent of the DBS checks, they may decide to withdraw their application. In the interests of all parties it is helpful to have a full and transparent discussion about any potential concerns that may arise prior to the DBS application being submitted.

The district safeguarding officer should be notified at the earliest opportunity if anything which would affect their suitability for a role should be revealed on the confidential declaration.