



## PART 3: RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF PARISH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

### THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Good recruitment, selection and management procedures will:

- help screen out and discourage those who are not suitable from joining your organisation.
- ensure paid staff and volunteers have clear rules and boundaries and feel supported in their roles.
- assure parents that all possible measures are being taken to ensure only suitable people will be recruited to work with children.

### SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS OF RECRUITING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Recruitment and selection procedures must be applied equally to all staff and volunteers and this includes:

- those who have been part of the parish for many years and are taking up a new role with children.
- those who turn 18 and have become staff members or volunteers in a group where they have been participants.
- those who are 16 or 17 and wish to continue as helpers or take up a role as a helper in a group.

The process is the same for both volunteers and paid staff but the process will be more formal for the latter. The following steps are necessary to ensure good practice:

#### DEFINING THE ROLE

A role description should be drawn up for and given to all volunteers. This can be done generically for volunteer roles within the parish. For a paid role a specific job description should be created.

#### APPLICATION FORM

All applicants must be asked to complete an application form relevant to the extent of the role being undertaken. A consent form for carrying out an Access NI check is also completed at this point.

#### DECLARATION

All applicants are asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children. All applicants will be required to declare any past



criminal convictions and cases pending against them. All applicants deemed suitable at interview will be required to complete an Access NI enhanced disclosure check.

## INTERVIEW

All potential staff and volunteers will be interviewed by the Parish Panel sometimes in conjunction with other relevant individuals such as the leader-in-charge. The level of formality of the interview should reflect the role being undertaken. An interview for a Sunday School teacher should be fairly informal, however an interview for a paid member of staff should be more formal and comply with fair employment regulations.

## REFERENCES

References should be taken up from at least two people who are not family members and, ideally, one of whom should have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's previous work or contact with children. References should be taken up **in writing** and should be followed up **orally**.

## NORTHERN IRELAND - ACCESSNI CHECK

As this process can change periodically, follow the latest procedure outlined on the *Safeguarding Trust* section of the Church of Ireland website [www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org)

## RECORD KEEPING

Details of the selection and recruitment procedure should be recorded and securely stored as per data protection regulations.

## RATIFYING THE APPOINTMENT

At the conclusion of the selection and recruitment process the panel recommends the individuals to the select vestry which is the appropriate body to ratify the appointment of the individual. A contract of employment (in the case of a member of staff) or a volunteer agreement (in the case of a volunteer) is signed by the individual and incumbent on behalf of the select vestry. A contract of employment with a paid member of staff should be drawn up by legal / human resources professionals.

**Please note that a member of staff or volunteer cannot begin their work until they have obtained a satisfactory Access NI Enhanced Disclosure check. This also applies to clergy and they must have a satisfactory Access NI check prior to ordination and/ or licensing.**

## STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS FROM OUTSIDE THE UK AND IRELAND

Background checks are not possible for many overseas applicants. Staff and volunteers from abroad may produce certificates of good conduct from their home church or statutory agencies in their country of origin. Such certificates must be treated with extreme caution as there is no way to confirm their validity. As with any other criminal conviction disclosure, it can only provide 'known' information.



Panels must make every effort to verify the suitability of candidates by careful use of references and interview. **NB** What constitutes an offence in the UK (and would be seen as child abuse) may not in the home country of the applicant. References therefore need to be viewed with this in mind.

It is advisable also to require candidates to sign a sworn declaration that there is nothing in their background which would prevent their working with children.

## MANAGING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Good management of volunteers and paid staff will contribute to safe activities for children. Good management will also create an atmosphere where staff and volunteers feel valued, are listened to and where issues can be dealt with quickly by systems already in place.

Effective management for all staff and volunteers should include:

### INDUCTION

New staff and volunteers must have training that includes basic awareness and understanding of child protection issues. The training should explain the procedures and guidelines and also include an introduction to the activities and ethos of the group they have joined. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of what is expected and required of them and the boundaries or limits within which they must operate.

### PROBATIONARY PERIOD (PAID STAFF) / TRIAL PERIOD (VOLUNTEERS)

All appointments should be conditional on a satisfactory period of work. Every new post should be reviewed within an agreed period of time - usually six months

### SUPERVISION

It is good practice to set up a supervision system for paid staff and volunteers, which means arranging to see staff and volunteers at regular intervals whether on their own or in small groups. This provides support for staff and volunteers and provides an opportunity to talk through any questions or difficulties they may have. It also gives the supervisor the opportunity to assess progress and whether any additional training should be provided. The supervisor should be the leader-in-charge of the organisation.

### FIXED TERM

It may also be helpful to indicate a particular duration for the role, say three to five years, thus allowing a volunteer to step back with dignity rather than feeling that resignation may be misinterpreted.



## ANNUAL APPRAISAL (STAFF) / REVIEW (VOLUNTEER)

The purpose of this is to review general performance and also to give the opportunity to discuss any relevant changes in the personal circumstances of staff and volunteers. The appraisal/review also provides the opportunity to highlight any required future support or skills training. Parishes should aim to provide access to at least one training or development opportunity per year for each member of staff or volunteer.

## COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Everyone has the right to complain or report a grievance. Children, parents, staff and volunteers should be facilitated in raising a concern or complaint. Written complaint and grievance procedures should be in place and communicated to all associated with each organisation e.g. a complaints form, an anonymous comments box or a meeting with the leader-in-charge.

Everyone also has the right to appeal a decision made regarding a complaint or grievance. Parishes should consider how to facilitate this e.g. through a subcommittee of the select vestry. In certain circumstances select vestries may need to seek legal advice.

It is important that a child related complaint or grievance, which does not relate to abuse, can be dealt with in a separate procedure.

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

This procedure is appropriate for all non-child protection concerns regarding staff and volunteers' conduct or practice. A grievance procedure should be included within the contract of employment of all paid staff.

## UNDER 18S WORKING WITH CHILDREN

It is never appropriate to require someone aged less than 18 years to take on the role of leader or be in sole charge of children as this would mean leaving a child in charge of children. At least two adults should be in charge of any group of children. However U18s who wish to help should complete a volunteer application form, provide references and have an informal chat with the leader-in-charge. Permission from the Parish Panel must be sought by the senior leader-in-charge before any U18 is involved in such a role.

If under 18s are assisting in order to gain expertise, citizenship development, personal or professional development and are not expected to take on the full range of duties of a member of staff or volunteer or be left in sole charge of children, they will not meet the criteria for regulated posts and will not require an AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure check until the age of 16. At the age of 16 they should have an Access NI Enhanced Disclosure check carried out. If at 18 they wish to take



up a leadership role then assuming they have been in constant contact with the group there is no requirement to repeat this aspect of the the recruitment process.

Under 18s must be provided with an appropriate form of training to cope with basic areas, such as bullying, shouting, physical contact, emergency procedures and first-aid policy. Such training must also include the need to safeguard themselves in situations where their actions may be misconstrued, without undergoing the full training required of core leadership. The panel should ensure such training is provided and the leadership of the group should ensure compliance with these standards.

It is essential that U18s work at all times under those adults who have been trained to implement *Safeguarding Trust*.

