

The Benefice of Witney has adopted the Diocese of Oxford's policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, revised February 2018.

- 1 As an organisation using the DBS Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions involving working with children and vulnerable adults, The Benefice of Witney complies fully with the DBS 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 conviction or other information revealed.
- 2 The Benefice of Witney is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers and users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical or mental disability, or offending background.
- 3 This policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders can be made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- 4 We actively promote 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. In selecting people, we assess their skills, qualifications and experience.
- 5 A DBS Disclosure is only requested for eligible positions with children and vulnerable adults. For those positions where a DBS Disclosure is required, all application forms, job advertisements and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a DBS Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- 6 Where a DBS Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to complete a Confidential Declaration at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to the Safeguarding Officer and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- 7 For eligible positions involving work with children and vulnerable adults we ask questions about the applicant's entire criminal record on the Confidential Declaration Form, as the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 provides that for this purpose no convictions are regarded as unspent. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- 8 Under the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 it is prohibited to employ disqualified people from working in regulated positions.
- 9 At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. A risk assessment may be undertaken, when offences are disclosed, which takes into account the circumstances of the offence and the position applied for.

- 10 We make the DBS Code of Practice readily available through the Diocesan website.
- 11 We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- 12 We follow the Diocesan procedure for dealing with complaints relating to DBS Disclosures and the use of DBS Disclosure information.
- 13 Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.
- 14 It is our policy that no-one who has been convicted or who has accepted a caution for a sexual offence against a child will be permitted to undertake regulated activity or have unsupervised access to children.
- 15 A person convicted of, or who has accepted a caution for, any other offence against a child or vulnerable adult or for whom there are unresolved serious allegations outstanding will only be allowed to undertake regulated activity or have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults with the express agreement of the incumbent following consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and the police.
- 16 A person known to be convicted of, or to have accepted a caution for, an offence against a child or vulnerable adult will be subject to an individual agreement defining attendance at worship and other church activities.

Adopted by Witney PCC 24 January 2022

Adopted by Minster Lovell PCC 3 December 2021

Signed *Toby Wright*

Counter-signed *Kate Banks* Witney PCC

Counter-signed *Hugh White* Minster Lovell PCC

Review date: 5 years from date of adoption