



Disclosure Policy 2024

(to be reviewed in line with Diocesan Safeguarding Policy)

Purpose

The PCC (as the employing body) of All Saints' Church, Preston On Tees is committed to ensuring the safety of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by applying the Durham Diocese Disclosure and Barring Guidance (updated 2022) as part of its Safer Recruitment Process.

Name Matt Levinsohn

Position: Chair of PCC, Vicar

Signature

Date:

16th September 2024

Contents

Specific Responsibilities

1. General Outline	1
2. Scope.....	1
3. Responsibility	1
4. Operation of the System.....	2
5. Related Documents.....	4
6. Statement of Employment of Ex Offenders.....	4
7. Dealing with Criminal Records	6

Specific Responsibilities

The person named below is authorised by the PCC to act as Manager for this policy: Diane Backhouse, Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The person named below is authorised by the PCC to act as DBS Administrator for this policy: Shiromi Davison, All Saints' Administrator.

1. General Outline

This policy covers the process by which All Saint's PCC will implement Section 9 'Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)' of Durham Diocese's Safer Recruitment and and People Management Guidance (March 2022). Its purpose is to ensure that the policy is applied to those individuals in positions as identified by the PCC in the Safeguard Matrix 2023 and is applied in a consistent manner. ^[1]_[SEP]

2. Scope

The Durham Diocese guidance on Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) states that it should be normal practice for parishes to carry out an Enhanced DBS Check on all employees and volunteers who are involved in activities with children, young people or vulnerable adults; those who are in positions of responsibility within the church or positions of trust.

DBS checks are carried out to find out if individuals have a criminal or employment record, which would compromise or preclude them from working with, or in extreme cases, having contact with children or vulnerable adults. In response to this the PCC has developed a Safeguard Matrix 2023 to identify those roles that require a DBS check to be undertaken and the level of check, alongside further safer recruitment processes.

3. Responsibility

The DBS Administrator, in consultation with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, who is also the DBS Manager, and following our Safer Recruitment Process, should initiate all new applications in a timely manner. All Saints' follows the government's 'Eligibility Guidance for DBS checks'.

4. Operation of the System

New Applications

Before taking up a position in church, whether employed or voluntary, an individual will have to undertake All Saints' Safer Recruitment Process, part of which includes a DBS check. The job description used in the safer recruitment process of each role, whether staff or voluntary, will highlight the need for a DBS check.

Confidential Declaration Forms

A Confidential Declaration Form, alongside Privacy Notice, must be provided with all applications for DBS checks. The Parish Safeguarding Officer will supply these to all ministry leads to give to new applicants. They are to be returned to the Parish Safeguarding Officer only. Any declaration on the form must be referred to Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Beth Miller, for discussion and decision involving the applicant appropriately.

Appointments will be deferred until a final decision, and risk assessment if necessary, has been made.

DBS Checks

Prior to an application for DBS Check being requested from the Diocesan office the applicant is informed that they have a right to decline a DBS check. ^[L]_[SEP] If an individual declines a DBS Check the Incumbent must be informed immediately by the DBS Manager. The Incumbent, in a timely manner, will discuss the reasons for the check being declined with the individual. If after this meeting the individual still declines a check then the Incumbent will inform them that they cannot take up the position for which the application was being sought. ^[L]_[SEP]

Upon agreement of a DBS Check being carried out, the DBS Administrator will commence the process via email and arrange a meeting with the applicant to check the appropriate identification documents, and will then complete the online Disclosure Application Form. In all cases the fees will be paid by the PCC. ^[L]_[SEP]

Upon DBS Check completion, the DBS office will inform the Diocesan office, the DBS Manager and the applicant of the outcome. Where the outcome is Clear, i.e. a nil return, the DBS Manager will inform the applicant of their pending DBS certificate arriving and email instructions for signing up to the update service.

Where the outcome is Negative, i.e. for those that raise queries, the Diocesan office will make recommendations on the basis of the offence recorded. The subsequent recommendation, if no concerns are raised, will be communicated to the applicant and Incumbent, via the DBS Manager, and the applicant may be confirmed in the role being sought. <sup>[L
SEP]</sup>The DBS Manager will also communicate this to the Ministry Team leader.

If a negative recommendation is received from the Diocesan office, then the applicant must immediately be informed, by the Incumbent, that they may not take up the applied for position. The concerns raised by the Diocesan office, should then be confidentially discussed with the applicant to explain the Diocesan office recommendation.

Any information relating to the subsequent process involving a negative outcome must be held and communicated confidentially, and only to those directly involved, i.e. the Diocesan office, the Incumbent and the DBS Manager. A secure record is kept by the DBS Manager of all those who have been DBS Checked and the outcomes on a password protected computer for the duration of their role as staff/volunteer at All Saints'. If printed out this record is kept in a locked cabinet with restricted access.

If the individual already holds a diocesan DBS certificate they will need to provide the original for the DBS Manager to verify with the Diocese.

If the individual already holds a DBS certificate and it is recorded on the update service this can be verified by the DBS Manager and accepted.

On completion of the full Safer Recruitment process, including DBS check where necessary, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will inform the ministry lead that the new volunteer is cleared to take up the applied for position on their team.

Update service: we are encouraging staff and volunteers to sign up to the DBS update service so certificates can be checked annually by the Parish Safeguarding Officer/DBS Manager in January. This also relinquishes the need for DBS checks to be applied for every three years.

Disclosure certificates obtained from previous or other employers, or in previous or other voluntary roles, are only portable if the individual is registered with the 'DBS Update Service'

If an individual is subscribed to the DBS Update Service, they will be asked to confirm which workforce (i.e. Child, Adult, Child & Adult, Other) and level of DBS their current DBS certificate is for. If these details meet the requirements of the new role the individual will be asked for their DBS certificate details. The DBS Manager will view the DBS Certificate and the DBS Update Service will be accessed to establish if anything has changed since the certificate was issued.

Re-Checks

All staff and volunteers will be required undertake a DBS re-check every 3 years.

Reporting to PCC

The DBS Manager will report to the PCC annually, either in person or in writing, with regard to progress in the implementation of the Disclosure Policy.

5. Related Documents

Safer Recruitment And People Management Guidance (Church of England)

- Section 9 - Diocesan Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/section-9>
(Version 1, dated 11th March 2022)
- Section 10 - Criminal Records:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/section-10>
(Version 1, dated 6th September 2023)

Government Guidelines: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance>

6. Statement of Employment of Ex Offenders

All Saints' Church wishes, in line with our convictions about the life of Jesus, to forgive and give people as fresh a start as God offers us; and, at the same time, to defend those who could be vulnerable to harm. Our aim is that this policy balances these two elements:

1. When All Saints' Church uses criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions, which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order,

they will comply fully with the DBS [code of practice](#) and undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

2. All Saints' Church undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
3. All Saints' Church can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that All Saints' Church 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).
4. All Saints' Church can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.
5. All Saints' Church is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
6. All Saints' Church 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.
7. All Saints' Church selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
8. 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.
9. All Saints' Church ensures that all those in All Saints' Church who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
10. All Saints' Church also ensures that the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Incumbent 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.
11. At interview, or in a separate discussion, All Saints' Church ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that

