STANDARD 1: PROTECTING

1.1A GUIDANCE ON SAFE RECRUITMENT FOR LAY CHURCH PERSONNEL WHO ARE WORKING OR MINISTERING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

SAFE RECRUITMENT

When working with children and young people, it is essential to maintain the highest standards of recruitment and screening to ensure their safety and well-being. While personal familiarity with someone may provide a certain level of trust, it is still essential to conduct thorough background check and reference checks to ensure that individuals have the necessary character, suitability and qualifications if relevant, for working with children. In addition to police checks, taking up references is an important step in the recruitment process. Contacting and speaking with individuals who can provide insight into an applicant's previous work experience, character and conduct can help assess their suitability for working with children. References can provide valuable information about an individual's interpersonal skills, professionalism, and ability to work effectively in a child-centred environment.

Good recruitment, selection and management procedures will:

- Help screen out and discourage those who are not suitable to work with or have access to children and, if necessary, ensure as far as reasonably practicable that they do not have access to children.
- Ensure church personnel have clear rules and boundaries and feel supported in their roles.
- Assure parents/carers that all possible measures are being taken to ensure only suitable people will be recruited to work with children.

RECRUITMENT FOR NON-NOMINATED CHURCH PERSONNEL

Recruitment and selection procedures must be applied equally to all non-appointed staff and volunteers, and this includes:

- Those who have been part of the parish/diocese 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 they have been participants in.
- Those who are 16 or 17 and wish to continue as helpers or take up a role as a helper in a group (in line with Access NI and Vetting legislation in ROI).

The following steps should be undertaken by the Parish Panel (who oversee recruitment and selection) and are necessary to ensure good practice:

1. Defining the Role:

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

2. Application Form ***(1.1A Template 1)***

All applicants must be asked to complete an application form. The application form may be more extensive for a staff position than a volunteer position. All church personnel will confirm, in writing, their acceptance of all Safeguarding policies, and this confirmation will be stored locally.

3. Declaration (as part of the application process) ***(1.1A Template 2)***

All applicants are required to sign a declaration outlining their agreement to share information and maintain confidentiality, alongside a requirement to notify the organisation if they are being currently investigated.

4. Interview ***(1.1A Template 3)***

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 volunteer may be informal; however, an interview for a member of staff should be more formal and comply with the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland Order) 1998 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 (ROI). All applicants deemed suitable at interview may be required to complete a consent form for carrying out an Access NI check at this point (NI) or to complete a Garda Vetting invitation form (ROI) if the role is eligible for Garda Vetting or AccessNI.

5. References ***(1.1A Template 4)***

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.

6. AccessNI and Garda Vetting.

If the role requires an AccessNI or Garda Vetting Check the procedures outlined on the Safeguarding website should be followed. For information on Garda Vetting follow this link *https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/garda-vetting/* for information on AccessNI follow this link *https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/access-ni/*
For more detailed information see ***Guidance 1.1B.***

Please note that if the roles requires an AccessNI or Garda Vetting Check a member of staff or volunteer cannot begin their work with children until they have obtained a satisfactory AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure check (NI) or a vetting disclosure has been received from the National Vetting Bureau (ROI) and it has been assessed by the Parish Panel. This also applies to clergy, and a satisfactory AccessNI check (NI) or vetting disclosure (ROI) must have been received and assessed prior to ordination, institution to an incumbency or other charge or granted a licence to officiate.

7. Record Keeping:

Details of the selection and recruitment procedure should be recorded and securely stored as per data protection regulations ***(Appendix E)***. These records will be subject to audit by the Diocesan Support Team in the triennial evidence-based audits.

8. Ratifying the Appointment:

At the conclusion of the selection and recruitment process, the Parish 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. The volunteer agreement may take the form of a letter of appointment. A contract of employment with a member of staff should be drawn up by legal/human resources professionals. When ratifying the appointment, it may also be helpful to indicate a particular duration for the role, for example, three to five years.

9. Induction:

An appropriate induction is provided including relevant aspects of the Child Safeguarding Policy and the applicant is asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of the Child Safeguarding Policy ***(Guidance 1.5A).***

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE FOR NOMINATED CHURCH PERSONNEL

Some members of church personnel such as members of the Parish Panel may be nominated by the Rector to the Select Vestry for ratification of appointment or in the case of the Diocesan Support Team, or Diocesan Safeguarding Panel, these can be recommended by the Bishop and approved by the Diocesan Council. Although a formal recruitment procedure may not be required, the following steps should still be undertaken before the person commences their role:

1. A Garda Vetting or AccessNI check must be undertaken (if required), and the relevant disclosure certificate shared with the Parish Panel.
2. The applicant must sign a declaration form ***(1.1A Template 2).***
3. An appropriate induction is provided including child relevant aspects of the Child Safeguarding Policy and the applicant is asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of the Child Safeguarding Policy ***(Guidance 1.5A).***

STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS FROM OUTSIDE THE UK AND IRELAND

Full background checks may not be 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 caution, as it may not be possible 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** Something which constitutes an offence in UK/Ireland (and would be seen as child abuse) may not in the country of the home church. References, therefore, need to be viewed with this in mind. In addition, applicants from abroad are required to complete a Worker from Abroad form ***(1.1A Template 5).***

PROBATIONARY PERIOD (STAFF) / TRIAL PERIOD (VOLUNTEERS)

All appointments should be conditional on a satisfactory period of work. The Parish Panel should review every new appointment within an agreed period – usually six months.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

It is good practice to set up a supervision system for paid staff, which means arranging to see staff at regular intervals, whether on their own or in small groups. Volunteers should also be provided with a system of support. This provides an opportunity to talk through any questions or difficulties they may have. It also gives the supervisor the opportunity to assess progress and determine whether any additional training should be provided. Each Parish Panel will determine who the appropriate person/people will be to supervise staff and volunteers. Supervision and support also provide the opportunity to review practice and general performance and identifying learnings going forward. Additionally, staff should be appraised on an annual basis.

1.1A TEMPLATE 1: SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT

CONTACT DETAILS

Full Name:

Date of Birth: Male: Female:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel: Email:

Previous Name *(if different from above):*

EXPERIENCE

Please highlight any experience of working with children and/or young people in a paid or voluntary capacity. Give outline dates if possible.

LEADERSHIP ROLE

Please outline the group(s) and leadership role(s) you would like to undertake as a leader.

Why do you want to undertake this role(s)?

OTHER INFORMATION

Please outline any other information relevant to this role which you would like to share *(e.g. Medical conditions or allergies).*

REFERENCES

Please provide the names and addresses of two people whom we could contact for a reference (not relatives).

1. First Referee	**2. Second Referee**
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Tel:	Tel:
Email:	Email:

DECLARATIONS

The Church has a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders which is available from a member of the Parish Panel on request.

If required, additional questions relevant to this role will be asked as part of the AccessNI/ Garda Vetting application process, a copy of relevant forms will be stored by the Parish/ Diocese and relevant sections will be shared with the COI Safeguarding Board to process the AccessNI/Garda Vetting check.

If required, I consent to an AccessNI Enhanced check/ Garda Vetting check being undertaken for the role for which I have applied	Yes:		No:	
I acknowledge that I have read the relevant sections of the Child Safeguarding policy and declare I will uphold this policy in the role(s) I have applied for	Yes:		No:	
I shall uphold the requirements of the role and exercise a duty to care for any children in my charge	Yes:		No:	

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):

We are committed to protecting your personal information. By completing and signing this form you are confirming that you are consenting to the Parish holding and processing your personal data, including training for the purpose of contacting you by post, phone or electronically with regard to church activities. If you have any questions about how we process your personal data contact a member of the Select Vestry.

Name *(print):*

TRAINING DECLARATION

If you have not undertaken any COI safeguarding training please leave this section blank.

I have attended training which has introduced me to the Church of Ireland Child Safeguarding Policy, and the recommended procedures to be followed when working with children have been explained to me.

Date of signature:	Venue:
Signature:	

NEXT STEPS

Please return this form to a member of the Parish Panel; they will contact you to arrange an informal interview.

With this application form you may have received information to complete an **AccessNI/ Garda Vetting Check**. Please complete the instructions in regard to this and bring the form (and supporting document originals) to the interview.

Please note that a leadership role can only be undertaken once the Parish Panel have formally approved it.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARISH PANEL

NOTES

- *If required, furnish the applicant with an AccessNI/Garda Vetting application pack.*
- *If a break of 6 months or more occurs in any volunteer's service, then a new interview and vetting process should be undertaken.*

REFERENCES

REFERENCE (1) RECEIVED: Yes: No:

REFERENCE (2) RECEIVED: Yes: No:

APPLICATION FORM

Date application form received: Form complete? Yes: No:

PANEL INTERVIEW *Or refresher interview if the volunteer has been in the role*

Panel Member (1): Panel Member (2):

Panel Member (3): Date of interview:

Recommendation: Approved: Not Approved: Deferred:

NOTES

1.1A TEMPLATE 2: DECLARATION FORM

I confirm and declare that all confidential and personal information that is disclosed to me or to which I have access during the course of acting as

will be kept strictly confidential, and shall:

a. Not be disclosed or otherwise made available by me to any person, except in accordance with the procedures set out in the Child Safeguarding Policy.

b. Be used by me only for the purpose of the procedures set out in the Child Safeguarding Policy.

If I am required to disclose confidential or personal information in accordance with law or by virtue of a court or similar order, other than in accordance with the Child Safeguarding Policy, nothing in this declaration prevents me from doing so. However, in those circumstances, I will inform the relevant Church Leader without delay.

I acknowledge that some or all of the confidential and personal information may contain 'personal data' and 'sensitive personal data' within the meaning of data protection legislation, and I therefore agree to comply with my obligations under this legislation. In so far as I am the data processor in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, then I agree only to process personal data on, and subject to, the instructions of the relevant data controller, maintain appropriate security measures against all unlawful processing in respect of the personal data, and allow the relevant data controller to monitor and audit my compliance with my obligations in respect of personal data. My obligations under this declaration continue even after I may cease to act as a:

There is no information about me relating to concerns regarding my ministry and safeguarding, that I have not disclosed as part of my recruitment process, that is relevant to this role.

I undertake to inform the *[PARISH/DIOCESE]:* if, after signing this declaration, I become subject to investigation by any statutory body, professional regulator, or church authority in relation to allegations or concerns involving[1]:

- children or young people;
- vulnerable adults;
- behaviour that may bring my ministry into disrepute.

I understand that failure to disclose relevant information, or the provision of false or misleading information, may result in permission being refused or withdrawn.

Signed: **Date:**

[1] *For clarity this may refer to investigations by statutory bodies or professional regulators into criminal behaviour or civil matters relating to (but not limited to) violence, abuse, misuse of drugs, drink driving, or harassment.*

1.1A TEMPLATE 3: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Beware of 'closed' questions which make it possible to answer either 'yes' or 'no'.

Ask questions like 'What do you think about? / What are your views on?'

Put the candidate at ease – ask first about his/her interests or hobbies.

Discuss the candidate's career objectives and why he/she applied for this particular post.

Ensure the questions relate directly to the needs of the job.

If any offences were declared by the candidate, the interview should provide an opportunity for an open and measured discussion.

IDEAS FOR QUESTIONS TO ASK

You will probably need to choose only one question from each category.
The question you choose will depend on the requirements of the job.

1. Relating to experience, qualifications, training

What have been your roles and responsibilities in working with children?

Why are you volunteering for this role?

What skills/qualities would you bring to the role?

What is your understanding of the importance of child protection for staff and volunteers?

2. Relating to children's learning and development

How would you plan to provide an appropriate programme?

How do you think the group can meet the needs of the children?

What type of activities do you think the group should offer the children?

3. Relating to attitudes

How would you settle new children into the group?

What are your views on establishing and maintaining rules and codes of behaviour in the group?

What would you do if you found a child being bullied and treated unfairly by other children?

How would you deal with a disruptive child?

What are your views on disciplining children?

4. Relating to working with parents

How do you see the role of the parent in the group?

How do you think parents can help you with working with children?

How would you encourage parents to become involved in the group?

5. Relating to working in a team

What do you see as your role in the team?

What skills and qualities can you bring to the team?

How do you feel about working as part of a team?

What is your previous experience of working in a team?

How do you feel about working in a Christian environment?

6. Relating to ongoing personal development

How do you intend to keep up to date with any technical information needed for the job?

What are your feelings about undertaking training?

Is there any area in which you would like further training/development?

What difficulties have you had in attending training in the past?

What training would you need to undertake this role?

1.1A TEMPLATE 4: REFERENCE REQUEST FORM

[INSERT NAME]:

has expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer with

[INSERT NAME OF DIOCESE/PARISH]:

and has given your name as a referee.

This is a position with regulated access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children.

[PLEASE TICK]

Yes: No:

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all information contained on the form will remain confidential, and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor, should they be offered a position. We would appreciate you being candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person?

In what capacity?

What attributes does this person have which you would consider makes them a suitable volunteer?

How would you describe their personality?

Please rate this person on the following *[PLEASE TICK]*

	Below Average	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self-motivation					
Motivation of others					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Signed:

Date:

Role:

1.1A TEMPLATE 5: WORKER FROM ABROAD FORM

1. Whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere, have you ever been investigated in respect of or charged with or convicted of any convictions, cautions, informed warnings or diversionary youth conferences that are not subject to filtering, or are you at present subject to any investigations by children or adult services, or the police due concerns about the treatment of children or vulnerable adults / adults at risk or in need of protection?

Yes: No: *(If yes to any of the above give details on separate sheet)*

2. Have you been placed on a sex offenders' register **in your present or any other jurisdiction?**

Yes: No: *(If yes to any of the above give details on separate sheet)*

I, the undersigned, who have applied to work / volunteer as

[INSERT NAME OF POSITION]

do hereby certify and warrant that in completing this form and in furnishing all the information contained herein or attached hereto, I am doing so in good faith and I further certify and warrant that all such information is true and accurate and constitutes a full disclosure of all material facts known to me.

Signed:

Full name *(block capitals)*:

Date:

When completed and signed, return this form to the Parish Panel.

1.1A TEMPLATE 6: ANNUAL REVIEW OF VOLUNTEER OR STAFF MEMBER

CONFIDENTIAL

Name:

(To be completed by each member of staff or volunteer annually and returned and discussed with the supervising leader then forwarded to the Parish Panel)

We thank you for all you do for this parish organisation and hope that this exercise may be helpful as you reflect on your work.

The parish wishes to support you in your work with children. Are there any areas of your work in which we might provide training to assist your skills development?

Have you any suggestions for resources, or other ideas which might develop your work?

Has there been any change in your personal circumstances you wish to share which may affect your capacity to continue in this role?

Yes: No: *(Please give details below if appropriate)*

Have you any questions you wish to ask or further comments you wish to make?

In line with Data Protection regulations, we are committed to protecting the personal information we hold on you. By providing the information requested, you are giving us permission (consent) to use this information for Safeguarding, legal or regulatory purposes and we will use it for no other purpose without further consent unless mandated or required to do so under the Data Protection Act 2018 or equivalent legislation. If you have any questions about how we process your personal data, please contact a member of the Panel.