The Diocese of Southwark

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Introduction

The Church of England Is for everyone, and it is a priority for us to reflect the diversity of the community the Church serves across the whole parish. We welcome applications from interested and suitably qualified people, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), including the DBS update service and associated registered bodies to assess applicant's suitability for an eligible post, the Parish undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. We follow:

- Legislation outlined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act of 1974,
- The requirements of the Church of England Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance,
- the DBS Code of Practice when handling disclosure information, including that obtained from the DBS Update service (all registered bodies are also required to comply with this).

Process.

A disclosure is only requested where DBS eligibility criteria are met.

For those positions where a disclosure is required, the level of check will be made explicit on the job or role advertisement.

Advertisements are required to state that a DBS check will be requested in the event of an individual being offered the position.

Job offers are conditionally based on satisfactory completion of the check.

Where DBS check forms part of the recruitment process, the Church of England Confidential Declaration form (CDF) must be completed, and this should be included in all recruitment documentation from the outset.

CDFs will only be viewed by those who need to see them as part of the recruitment and selection process, including the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors who will assess any information disclosed

Unless the nature of the position allows for questions about the entire criminal record to be asked, we will only ask about “unspent convictions” as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All involved in recruitment are sign posted to suitable training, including the Church of England Safer Recruitment module and DBS specific training for those requiring it, including guidance in the relevant legislation, for example the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place about any offence or other matter that might be relevant to the position.

Implications of failure to reveal information.

Failing to reveal information that is directly relevant could lead to the withdrawal of the offer of the post or role. In the case what disclosure information is received, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors will be informed so the information contained can be assessed, although that is not necessarily a barrier to the person undertaking the post applied for.

We undertake to discuss any matters revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of work. (paid or voluntary).

Copies of the documents referred to in this policy are available on request. And this policy sits alongside other Church of England policies and practice guidance relating to recruitment processes and safeguarding.