

Synod Safer Recruitment Workshop

How do we recruit PCC members and volunteers?

Using the nine key steps to recruitment, synod members considered how they would deal with three different recruitment scenarios -

1. Someone who has volunteered in the church for a long time, who may not have gone through a recruitment process (Flower Arranger)
2. A PCC / elected position that it was difficult to recruit to (Churchwarden)
3. A new position (Memory Café Leader)

Key messages arising from the workshop

Safer recruitment is about-

- protecting volunteers as well as those visiting the church; and
- managing the risk - there needs to be a proportionate approach.

Everyone should know about safer recruitment - inappropriate appointments could be itself a form of abuse.

There needs to be an open and honest culture and consideration needs to be given to the knowledge & skills AND behaviours of our volunteers and staff. For example, are they a bully or are they a threat to visitors?

PCCs need to be aware of who their volunteers are and how they were recruited.

Developing a proportionate approach - summary of discussion points

When looking at the three scenarios synod members discussed how they would deal with each situation, considered the hurdles and how they would approach the conversation.

Someone who has been in the organisation for a long time

The key consideration for this scenario was how we can retrospectively ensure that the volunteer is safe and move from an informal to a more formal arrangement.

It was felt that the first step could be to speak to the volunteer; ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities and where to go for advice and support.

Ideas about how to approach the conversation included-

- Churchwarden could lead the conversation
- Safeguarding officer could oversee
- The Diocese has new rules - 'we need to look after you'
- Put your arms around them e.g. annual cream tea
- Pair with a mentor

There is a need to ensure there is a different contract for the successor; and that the safer recruitment steps should be adopted.

Recruiting volunteers

The two key areas of discussion were around keeping our volunteers safe AND keeping those that we are supporting safe.

It was identified that there was a need to ensure that lone working procedures are in place. Suggestions included -

- Provide a telephone contact
- Find a helper, or working at same time as someone else
- Allow him/her to lock church
- Notify someone else they are in the building

The volunteer is the interface to vulnerable people and as such, it is important that we ensure that they are suitable for the role and suitably supported. This will protect the volunteer and others.

In order to do this you need to have in place -

- A role description / personal criteria
- Risk assessment
- Health and Safety arrangements

Recruiting PCC / elected members

These posts are nominated elected positions that are governed by the Church Representation Rules.

However there is an opportunity to ensure that they are suitable for the role. Suggestions included -

- Do you want xxx or NOBODY - should be an option
- Plan ahead - create role and responsibilities and make sure they are aware of what they are undertaking before they nominate.
- Have an honest conversation / be willing to prevent the election
 - 'the loving church is bigger than you xxx'
 - 'You are a trustee' - Charity Commission

Recruiting a new post

In all cases we should use all 9 steps to recruitment; including

- Full interview, recruiting process.
- Ads in local magazines
- JD & application
- Reference
- Consider if a DBS is required

Consider a 6-month and then annual review and ensure that appropriate training is in place.

Queries

Question	Answer
Is there a diocesan recruitment policy? Template?	There is not currently a diocesan recruitment policy, however this will be considered as part of our review of safer recruitment practices. The CofE Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance is available on the diocesan website: link to practice guidance Model templates are also available model templates
Do we have a template for risk assessment?	Recruitment risk assessments are carried out only when we have received a blemished DBS check. Only the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor completes the risk assessment. The safeguarding team will be developing a checklist for PCCs to use when recruiting.
Are we able to state that elected positions are subject to checks and references?	The CofE Safer Recruitment practice guidance states that the procedures must, wherever possible, be used for all positions, including PCC appointments. It is noted that insurance cover is only valid if this guidance is followed. There is more national and local research required to understand how this guidance links in with the Church Representation Rules (CRR) and what processes are adopted in other Dioceses.
Who disciplines an unruly warden or PCC member?	If a member of the PCC is not following safer recruitment practice then the local priest can talk to them and ensure that good practice is being adopted.
How do we prevent volunteers from stepping down?	Implementing safer recruitment practices; which includes ensuring that the volunteer is aware of and supported in undertaking their role is one way of ensuring that we have the right people in the right roles. We will research best practice in the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Actions for synod members

1. Discuss learning points and outcomes with PCCs and identify what changes / improvements are required.
2. Make a record, if you have not already done so, who your volunteers and staff are and if they have been safely recruited. This information is likely to be needed in the near future for the national safeguarding team.
3. Feedback to safeguarding team what has been changed and what difference it has been made - in order to share best practice.

Actions for diocesan safeguarding team and human resources

As part of the development of the three year safeguarding strategy -

1. Ensure that our guidance recognises how we recruit and retain our volunteers - use the term Safer Volunteering instead of Safer Recruiting.

2. Consider the development of a diocesan recruitment policy that covers all elements of recruitment; links to other guidance (e.g. CRR) and focuses on how we recruit and retain volunteers.
3. Develop a toolkit so that we are all consistent throughout. To include -
 - Checklist for recruitment
 - Example role profiles
 - Guidance on what roles do / don't require DBS checks
4. Develop and implement the national safeguarding database and record keeping procedures when they are finalised. It is anticipated that this will incorporate the ability to hold recruitment (DBS) and safeguarding training information at a diocese and PCC (parochial church council) level.

Actions for synod chair

1. Ensure that the vice chair of the house of laity is safely recruited.

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