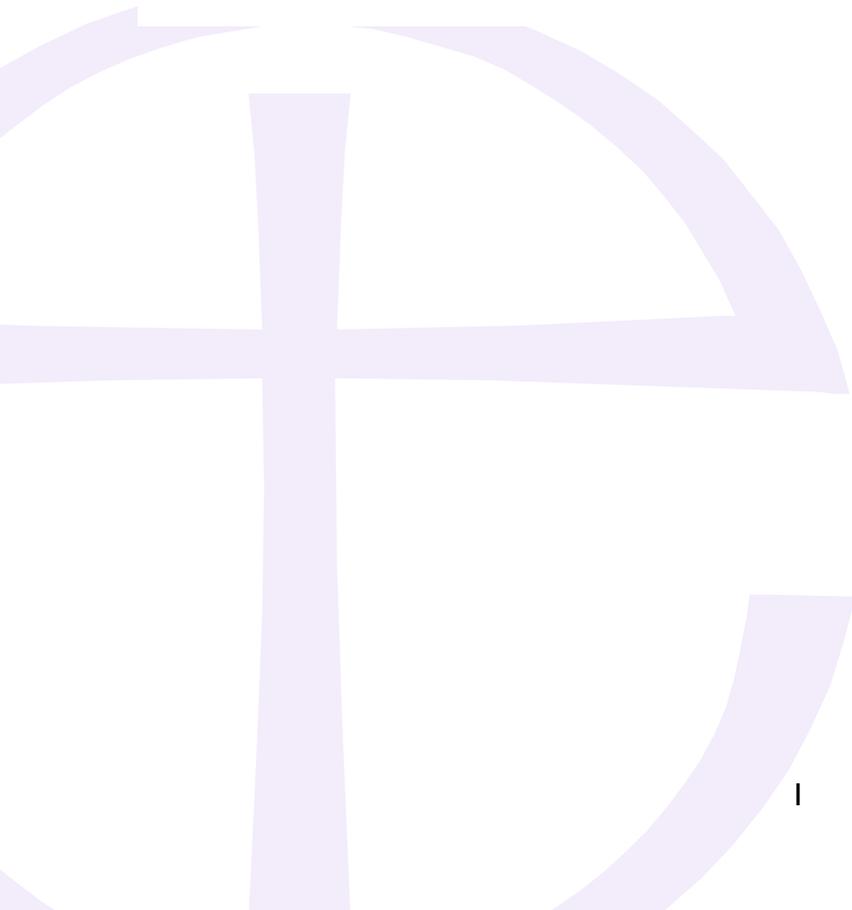




DIOCESE OF
GLOUCESTER

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY FOR THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST CATHARINE'S GLOUCESTER

This policy document contains advice and guidance on the Diocese of Gloucester's policy for working with children and young people in our churches and in local communities.



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Safeguarding Policy for the Parochial Church Council of St Catharine Gloucester

1. The PCC accepts the diocesan policy statement and guidelines on working with children and young people which can be found on pages 6 and 7 of this document.
2. The PCC seeks to provide a caring, warm and consistent atmosphere and environment in which children and young people can develop and grow and in which they can learn in safety. Children and young people will be treated as individuals and with equal concern.
3. Therefore the PCC recognises the following areas of work with children and young people
 - children and young people's groups held within Sunday services
 - children and young people's groups held at times other than during services (CCYG, NRG, Refresh)
 - outreach activities provided for local schools (for example assemblies, prayer spaces, experience Easter and Christmas activities)
 - residential activities organised for children and young people (for example SPREE, Soul Survivor)
4. The PCC:
 - I. Will ensure that everyone involved in the care of children and young people, whether through paid employment or volunteer roles are personally made aware of the diocesan policy and the PCC policy.
 - II. Will ensure that everyone involved in the care of children and young people (*existing and in the future from the date this PCC policy is accepted*) will be interviewed by the parish priest, or appropriate other and asked to complete the disclosure form which will be checked by a diocesan countersignatory. (It will be strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law will be seen only by the above named person or those acting on the Bishop's behalf).
 - III. Will ensure that completed forms are appropriately held in church records. All information on workers with children and young people should be kept locked away safely and confidentially.
 - IV. Will ensure it review its employment and volunteer recruitment practices so that every position sets out clearly what level of disclosure (where appropriate) applies, that no one is active in that role until the required disclosure has been received, and any subsequent risk assessment has been completed satisfactorily.
 - V. Will ensure that candidates for a paid post or volunteer position submit in writing any convictions or other disqualifying behaviour that might be revealed in the disclosure process in order to assist the recruitment decision process. (This information will only be taken into account when relevant to the post in question. It should be submitted in an envelope clearly

marked 'Private and confidential' and handed to the person specifically identified for this purpose in the recruitment process).

- VI. Will ensure that it complies with the rolling programme of (DBS) rechecks that are administered through the diocese.
- VII. Will ensure everyone involved in working with children and young people are clear of the nature of the work they have agreed to do and the name of the person to whom they are responsible.
- VIII. Will ensure the parish priest and nominated person will be responsible on the PCC's behalf for implementing and monitoring the PCC's policy
- IX. Will ensure that safeguarding training will be undertaken by those people that the parish priest and the named person deem necessary.
- X. Will ensure that the PCC and the Diocesan Human Resources Manager are informed of the names of those who work with children and young people and will be notified of any changes.
- XI. Nominates RACHEL HOWIE to be the Nominated Person to whom all cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be reported immediately.
- XII. Will make adequate provision for insurance cover for all activities for children and young people in line with the House of Bishop's guidance.
- XIII. Will make a copy of this policy available to all employees and volunteers of this church, and to parents/guardians.
- XIV. Will review this policy annually and ensure that a copy of this policy will be presented to the Archdeacon at the Visitation.
- XV. Will ensure that any individual organisation renting/using its' premises for activities involving children and young people, are aware of their own individual responsibilities to have appropriate safeguarding policies and processes in place.
- XVI. Will ensure that any complaint made regarding a child for whom we are responsible who may have been harmed or is in significant danger will be reported immediately and that we will fully cooperate with statutory agencies during any investigation into allegations concerning a member of the church community.
- XVII. Will inform the statutory agency of any suspected criminal offenders or concerns that we are made aware of in respect of our contact with children and will inform and work closely with the Diocesan Human Resources Manager and all statutory agencies throughout.
- XVIII. Will offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse and provide them with details of local and national support agencies.

XIX. Will work closely with the diocese to ensure that we effectively supervise and support any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.

XX. Will ensure that we work closely with the diocese to ensure that any required DBSs or other required checks and references including the five year rolling re-check programme are complied with.

XXI. Will work closely with the diocese in ensuring appropriate people are trained and updated on good practice, legal changes etc.

XXII. Will ensure that a copy of this policy will be displayed on the parish notice board alongside a ChildLine poster which can be downloaded from www.nspcc.org.uk free of charge.

By the incumbent

Signed:
Name/title
Dated:

By the churchwardens

Signed:
Name/title
Dated:

Signed:
Name/title
Dated:

Gloucester Diocese
Diocesan policy statement –
working with children and young people

1. Scripture teaches that all people are special because they are made in the image of God. This is therefore true for children and young people, who should be respected and protected. Jesus warned that those who exploited or abused children deserved profound condemnation. Within the Kingdom of God, children matter in their own right and are to be taken seriously.
2. The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Clergy and laity who work for the Church in a paid or voluntary capacity need to exercise the greatest care when working with those for whom they have been given responsibility.
3. The highest standards should be maintained therefore in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational circumstances. The exploitation of any relationships for any purpose will not be tolerated.
4. The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to creating a culture of informed vigilance which takes children, and adults who are vulnerable, seriously – and will work closely, and in partnership with, the local authority and statutory authorities to ensure that we offer best practice advice and guidance.
5. The Diocese of Gloucester accepts the principle of The Children Act (1989) that the welfare of the child is paramount, and will follow the Home Office Code of Practice: “Safe from Harm”, and the House of Bishops’ “Protecting all God’s Children” and “Safer Recruitment” advice and guidelines.
6. If allegations of abuse are made, then the Diocese of Gloucester will respond without delay and collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with investigating such allegations of child abuse. It will not conduct investigations on its own and will work in partnership with the police, local authority, and others to follow legal compliance, and to ensure we are able to offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person, or adult who has suffered abuse.
7. It will be standard practice in the Diocese of Gloucester to require completion of a common declaration form in accordance with guidelines of the Children Act 1989, from the following categories of people prior to selection or appointment for work within the Diocese:
 - all candidates for ordained ministry and accredited lay ministry
 - all clergy and accredited lay ministers moving into and within the diocese
 - employees of the Diocesan Board of Finance who are likely to have opportunities for contact with children and young people
 - volunteers who support the work of the Diocesan Advisory Boards and Committees on a regular basis

8. It is Diocesan policy that all PCCs should have in place a policy for Safeguarding/child protection – and that this is reviewed annually and a copy supplied as part of the requirements of the Archdeacon’s Visitation.
9. The Diocese will ensure that clergy and nominated local people are kept informed of changes in law, process etc – and that training is available for those who are responsible for/oversee local parish safeguarding practices.
10. The Diocese of Gloucester will seek to ensure that each paid post or volunteer position for which it is asked to act in the disclosure process is assessed for the appropriateness of a DBS disclosure. That any advertisement or other indication of an employment or volunteering opportunity will indicate where appropriate the level of disclosure that will be sought, and that the conditional nature of any offer of employment or volunteering role until the receipt of satisfactory disclosure information is clearly indicated.
11. The Diocese of Gloucester will seek to ensure that a candidate for a paid post or volunteer position for which it acts is asked in writing to list any convictions, or other disqualifying behaviour, that might be revealed in the disclosure process. This is in order to assist the recruitment decision process and in the knowledge that it will only be taken into account when relevant to the post in question. Also, that the candidate should be invited to submit any conviction or related information in writing prior to interview in an envelope clearly marked ‘Private and Confidential’ which should be handed to the person specifically identified for this purpose in the recruitment process.
12. The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to a process of five-year rechecking of employees and volunteers for whom this is appropriate, as part of its ongoing strategy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
13. The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to the safe storage and disposal of disclosure information in line with such guidance as may from time to time be provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service and in line with Data Protection requirements.
14. The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to the fair and sensitive use of disclosure information and will take every step to ensure that it, and those for whom it acts as an umbrella body, seek to achieve and maintain models of best practice. Where an applicant feels that disclosure information has not been handled in a fair and sensitive way an appeal process will be available, details of which can be obtained in writing from the Diocesan Human Resources Manager at Church House, Gloucester.
15. The Diocese of Gloucester will work closely with local churches to care for and supervise through appropriate contracts of behaviour, any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.

Applying the guidelines – a checklist for PCCs

Guideline 1: Inform and review

- The first guideline asks that this statement of policy should be brought to the notice of all existing and new workers with children and young people; and there should be evidence to show that all relevant individuals have read, understood and agreed to work within the policy.

Action to be taken: Make sure **all** are aware of the PCC's policy which should show clearly agreed aims and policy statements.

Ensure you have an annual process of review and that the policy is ready to share with the Archdeacon at the Visitation.

Guideline 2: Plan work in order to minimise situations where abuse may occur

- Potential abusive situations can be avoided by being aware of possible opportunities. Your policy should show the potential situations that are relevant to that parish's situation.
 - The following are areas to be considered when working with children and young people:
1. Opportunities for adults to supervise each other. So far as possible, arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of an activity being observed. Groups may need to meet in one large room or in adjoining rooms with the door left open. At least two adults should be present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. In many situations one should be female (e.g. when young children or girls are present).
 2. The situation of toilet facilities e.g. avoid the situation where an adult takes a single child to the toilet away from the rest of the group. If this is unavoidable, inform another adult of where they will be and for what purpose.
 3. The policy for meeting a child/young person e.g. ensure that no arrangement is made to meet an individual child or young person off church premises without a parent or other appropriate adult being present.
 4. Arrangements for taking children on outings. Never take a group of children or young people off the premises with fewer than two adults and ensure that you have parental consent.
 5. Arrangements for transporting children. Where children or young people have to be transported by car or minibus, try to arrange to have more than one of them in the vehicle. If this isn't possible ensure that the parents/carers are aware.

6. Review access to the premises e.g. consider the path to and from your premises. For example, avoid expecting children or young people to walk along a dark, unsupervised path.
7. Regularly review who can have access to the groups e.g. someone unknown to the group organisers should not have unsupervised access to children or young people.
8. Ensure that all know about the discipline procedures. It should be made clear that no physical punishment is allowed. Sanctions for where a child/young person's behaviour is inappropriate and/or could potentially harm another should be carefully reviewed and other advice/training taken from professionals eg where restraint may be required. No one should restrain a young person without appropriate training. If restraint has been necessary the nominated person should be informed immediately.

Guideline 3: Give children a chance to talk with an independent person

- This could be to
Childline 0800 1111
NSPCC 0800 800500
- Information for telephone contact should be displayed where children and young people can easily see it (e.g. Want someone to talk to? Ring ...)

Action to be taken: Make sure you are aware of the name of a suitable person whom a child or young person can contact and that such information is displayed.

Guideline 4: Apply agreed procedures to all paid staff and volunteers

- If agreed procedures are in place they may act as a deterrent to a person tempted to abuse. The PCC policy should apply to **all** those in close contact with children and young people.

Action to be taken: Be aware of all who may come into contact with children and make sure they are all aware of the PCC policy.

Guideline 5: Give clear roles to all paid staff and volunteers

- Paid workers, employed by the church, must have job descriptions clearly setting out their work and responsibilities. Volunteers should also have clearly stated what is expected of them. There should be a structured induction process which includes signing a document to say the person has been briefed on Child Protection and has seen the guidelines.

Action to be taken: Make clear in a brief, written statement, what is expected and to whom individuals are responsible. Have a structured induction process.

Guideline 6: Supervision as a means of protecting children

- Regular opportunities should be given for workers to meet together with the nominated person to
 - review and plan work
 - share experiences
 - receive training
 - talk about relationships with the children and young people

Action to be taken: Make sure such opportunities are available for individual and group supervision.

Guideline 7: Treat all would be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants

- Everyone wishing to work with children and young people in the church community must be asked to fill in an approved form. This would include details of name, address, date of birth, previous address and church if moved in last twelve months, details of previous related experience and a contact name for a reference (see flowchart on page 15).

Action to be taken: Ensure that this has been done even for those who are already working with children and young people.

Guideline 8: Taking up references

- All references should be taken up. If the applicant has not been known for at least two years, then these references **MUST** be in writing. Where a verbal reference is given, notes must be taken of what is said and date, time etc. and signed. Equal opportunities must be taken into consideration. Confidentiality should be maintained.

Action to be taken: Make sure references are given and **are** followed up to ensure they are provided by an appropriate person.

Guideline 9: Interviews – follow Safer Recruitment guidelines

- An extended conversation is recommended, based on information given in the written application, e.g.
 - previous work in the church
 - personal relationship with children (family babysitting etc.)
 - work with voluntary organisations
 - previous experience of working with children
 - reasons for being interested in working with children and young people in the church
 - Confidential Declaration Form is completed

Action to be taken: Make sure an interview, formal or informal, is given and notes are made.

Guideline 10: Convictions for criminal offences against children and young people

- All situations, which involve work with children and young people, are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all convictions must be declared. References are very important in this. Such information must be kept strictly confidential.

Action to be taken: Make sure the application form includes a declaration. Follow up if necessary, through the Diocese. Make sure all such information is kept confidential and securely locked away. The Diocesan Human Resources Manager can give advice in this process.

Guideline 11: Probationary period

- A probationary period might be for example one to six months depending on the nature of the role. This should coincide with a period of induction and training with regular supervision meetings and a review meeting at the end. Short-term volunteers should be supervised as if undertaking a probationary period.

Action to be taken: Make available resources for such supervision and training. If after, or during, a probationary period it is thought that the position should not be confirmed, advice should be sought from the Diocesan Human Resources Manager.

Guideline 12: How to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse

- It is important that you refer to the section called '**Abuse: What to look for, what to do**'.

Action to be taken: Make sure everyone working with children and young people is given a copy of '**Abuse: what to look for, what to do**' and understands it.

Guideline 13: Training

- It is recommended that those agreeing to work with children and young people and being accepted for such work should undertake some form of appropriate training. This can be at parish, deanery or diocesan level.

Action to be taken: Be aware of training opportunities and give encouragement and where necessary, financial backing to training initiatives.

Guidelines for nominated person for child protection

The reason for having a nominated person in each parish is to ensure that another person shares with the parish priest the responsibility for child protection. It is not intended that it should be an arduous or very time consuming appointment, but its importance should not be underestimated.

Protecting children and vulnerable adults requires continuing vigilance and ensuring the nominated person's identity is well known to all children and parents in the parish. He or she will be a person to whom the children's and youth leaders may turn for support and advice, particularly if they have concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker.

Responsibilities

The nominated person in each parish:

- should be familiar with the contents of the booklets and be jointly responsible with the parish priest for the implementation of these guidelines.
- Shares in the responsibility with the parish priest and PCC for the protection of children who come into the care of the church.
- should take an interest in the work of his/her church with children and young people so that he/she knows the children and youth leaders and is familiar with the type of activities undertaken by children's and youth groups
- should be involved with the careful selection and appointment of children's and youth leaders and should be one of the interviewers of prospective volunteers or paid workers.
- should ensure that the PCC have a full list of volunteers working with children and young people in the settings appropriate to that church/benefice
- should be alert to any unusual behaviour or inappropriate relationship on the part of any church worker with a child or young person.
- should, in the event of suspicion or an allegation of abuse, know when to seek advice from one of the Diocesan Advisers and when it is necessary to inform Social Services immediately.

General

The nominated person in each parish:

- should be known in the parish and especially to those who are working with children.
- should understand, and question how, church activities can ensure that children are best protected.

- should develop their activities with the PCC to monitor good practice and suggest better ways of doing things.
- should ensure Children's Workers know who to talk to if the Nominated Person is not available.
- should seek appropriate advice and keep up to date on best practice.
- may phone Diocesan Human Resources Manager to explore answers to any questions.
- must be clear about the insurance cover for the church, so that appropriate and proper action can be made.

Allegations

- You need to know the appropriate telephone numbers:

Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO)
Jane Bee – 01452 426994

The Safeguarding Children Service Child Protection Unit
01452 583638 (office hours 9am to 5pm)

Police Child Protection Unit (24 hrs)
01242 261112 (if no reply 01242 276086)

Social Services Child Protection Unit
01452 425144
(office hours 9am to 5pm)

The Diocesan Human Resources Manager is:
Judith Knight, Church House,
01452 835526/01452 410022

- If an allegation is made then the Nominated Person must immediately get in touch with one of the investigating agencies (The Safeguarding Children Service or Police) and inform the Diocesan Human Resources Manager that this has been done being clear of the difference between an allegation and a suspicion or concern. (Social Services can be phoned to give advice about a suspicion or concern, so that the Nominated Person can be clear about the way forward).
- If an allegation is made against an authorised minister, then the Nominated Person should immediately be in touch with the Diocesan Human Resources Manager (who will inform the Bishop of Gloucester or the individual should contact the Bishop or Archdeacon directly), after they have spoken to The Safeguarding Children Service or the Police.

A confidential record must be kept of any accusation and this will include a record of phone calls, letters and conversations about the allegation. These records will be sent to the Diocesan Human Resources Manager, using a reliable and confidential means, ideally delivered by hand to Church House.

Advice for churches letting premises

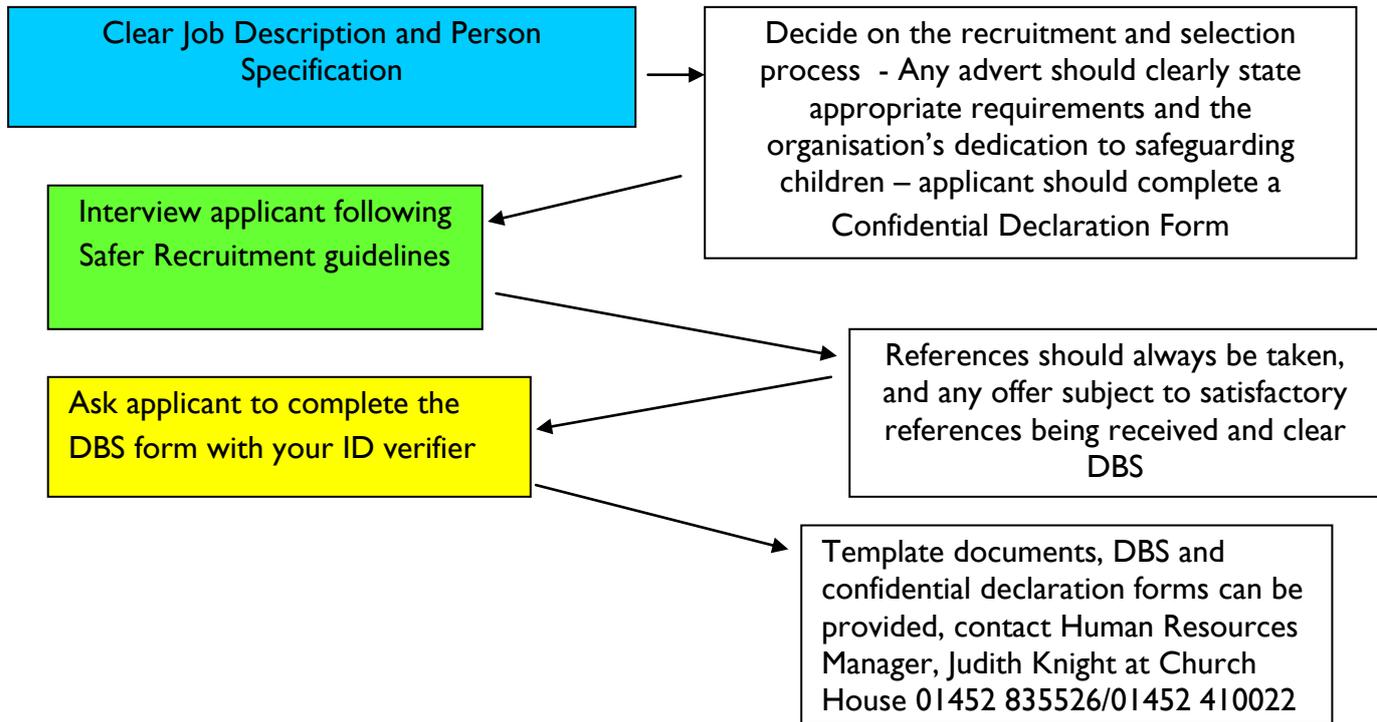
It is recommended that when contemplating the hire of a church hall or other premises whose use would involve work with children or young people that the following clause be added to licences:

The Licensees confirm that they are familiar with the Home Office Code of Practice 'Safe from Harm' and have an understanding of it and undertake to follow the code of practice contained therein in relation to work with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

It is advised that any groups using the premises specifically for regular or occasional work with children should be able to produce their own policy and confirm that leaders have been checked.

Diocese of Gloucester – safer recruitment checklist

Recruiting paid and voluntary staff for working with children



Send completed DBS form to Kate Peake DBS Administrator at Church House - clearly stating if this is a paid or voluntary post and attaching a copy of the job description to support the application to the DBS

Judith or Kate will inform you about what the DBS disclosure indicates and will confirm if the person is able to begin work with you. At this stage you can confirm a start date with them - or put any other assessments in place

Never ask for CVs to be sent in

Never make an unconditional offer of employment and give a start date

For Human Resources advice about safer recruiting contact Judith Knight the Diocesan Human Resources Manager at Church House

Criminal record checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is the government agency through which checks can be made to ensure the suitability of people to hold posts, particularly where they will have sole responsibility for children or vulnerable adults.

The aim of the DBS therefore is to offer a "one stop shop" for ascertaining whether an individual has a criminal record or has been under police investigation, or has been banned from working with children by having their name placed on lists held by the Department for Education or the Department of Health.

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 changes some of the arrangements for criminal record checks and introduces a new definition of what is called 'regulated activity'. Further changes are timetabled for Spring 2013 – so we are currently in an interim period. There are three levels of DBS check available from September 2012 (see the checklist over the page) – these checks are

- Enhanced DBS plus Barred List check – is only available for those in Regulated Activity (s The Childrens Barred List which is information held under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (formerly known as list 99).
- Enhanced – provides information about convictions/cautions and other relevant information but not whether a person is barred from a regulated activity
- Standard (the Diocese does not carry out standard checks)

Currently the diocese only carries out Enhanced and Enhanced plus checks appropriate to the role concerned in each application.

Regulated Activity

To obtain an **Enhanced plus check** the **Supervision and Frequency criteria** must be met.

Supervision = the issue of whether or not a volunteer or employee is supervised in their role is key. In most church situation, one worker will not be acting as the formal supervisor of another, it is more usual that people will work in small groups or teams. For someone in a supervision role where they are responsible for those working/volunteering and "is always able to see the supervised workers's actions during his/her work"

Frequency = where the activity meets one or more of the following: Once a week or Intensively 4 days in a 30 day period or between the hours of 2am and 6am (overnight)

To obtain an **Enhanced check** this is available in relation to those with significant contact through their work.

DBS checklist

The following lists are examples of what roles are appropriate for levels of DBS – as advised by the national church in September 2012 in line with recent legislative changes:

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1524550/sept%202012%20guidance.doc>

As this is interim guidance the lists set out here indicate the most likely position. Where an individual situation does not fit this norm, you should seek advice from the Diocesan Human Resources Manager.

Checklist one below - on this page there is information regarding clergy roles, checklist two refers to employed and volunteer roles

Checklist no 1 Clergy (Church of England)

No change: All should be subject to current safer recruitment guidance and all will be eligible for an Enhanced Criminal Record plus Barred List Check.

Role	Safer Recruitment?	Enhanced Check?	Enhanced Plus Barred List Check <i>Yes for all - tick boxes 64 and 65 on DBS form</i>
Archbishop, Bishop, Dean, Archdeacon	✓	✓	✓
Ordained and licensed clergy - stipendiary parish clergy -SSM and NSM clergy - chaplains - local ordained clergy - 'Permission to Officiate' clergy	✓	✓	✓
Seeking ordination training or ordination (NB extra check not needed when first at college after acceptance for training.)	✓	✓	✓
Ordained deacon	✓	✓	✓
Those candidating for ministry	✓	✓	✓
deacons	✓	✓	✓
Those holding Bishop's Certificate(s) in leading worship	✓	✓	✓

Checklist no 2 Working with children / young people

Little change: All should be subject to current safer recruitment guidance.

All will be eligible for an **Enhanced Criminal Record** Check (without Barred Information). Most will be eligible for an **Enhanced Criminal Record plus Barred List Check** – provided that they are not supervised and meet the frequency standard.

Role	Safer Recruitment?	Enhanced Check? <i>signif contact</i>	Enhanced Plus? <i>If yes, tick box 64 on DBS form</i>
Youth worker (employee / volunteer)	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency -
Children's worker (employee / volunteer)	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency
Family workers (with assumption that work done separately with children)	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency
Managers of youth, children's, family workers	✓	✓	If ticked for the worker then ✓ for manager
Bell ringers who teach/train – the adults who train / teach children plus the Tower Captains who manage those adults	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency -see section 8
Music leader where the choir / musical group is mainly with children or young people	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency
Server (C of E) – when the role includes supervision or training of children <18	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency
Caretaker - only where the role includes teaching, training, supervising or caring for children <18	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency
Leader of Parent & Toddler Groups – only where children are cared for away from the parents at any stage.	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency
Drivers for young people or children's activities organised by the church	✓	✓	Usually ✓ but decide based on Supervision and frequency

Duties and responsibilities of identification verifiers and countersignatories

1. **Identification verifiers** are the people locally who check individual identification and pass the DBS forms up to the diocesan DBS Administrator Kate Peake for countersigning and processing. These people are usually the Nominated Person for the PCC – and there is a simple checklist of the required evidence. The diocese will also offer some training on this as rules and requirements change.
2. **Countersignatories** are the individuals nominated by their organisation or to sign off a DBS and their details are registered with the DBS. Only those who have specifically applied for countersignatory status through the diocese can actually sign off a DBS form.
3. A prospective countersignatory must complete the application form. This requires over 70 pieces of information. This will be read by computer scanner and must therefore be written clearly using block capitals and black ink. Every letter should be contained within its appropriate box. One requirement is for a referee who has known you for over three years, and another is for identification documentation to be verified by the lead signatory.
4. It has been agreed with the DBS that the church is at liberty to use a one-stop clearing-house for disclosures. This arrangement means that for those making application as a countersignatory they should submit **the diocesan clearing-house address and not their private address** as the appropriate return address for disclosure. Thereafter, the diocesan clearing-house address should always be used when countersigning disclosure applications. At the present time the diocesan clearing house is Church House, College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LY (clearly marking your envelope for the attention of the Bishop's Officer for Child Protection).
5. Once this form is completed it should be submitted to the lead signatory within your scheme, who will complete the remaining questions validating your identification documents, sign the form and forward it to the DBS. The lead countersignatory is Judith Knight the Diocesan Human Resources Manager at Church House.

The duties of a countersignatory

1. There are two key tasks. The first is to countersign disclosure applications. The countersignatory, however, is responsible for the level of competence, understanding and integrity that are brought to bear in fulfilling this task. The Diocese will wish to ensure that there are occasional training briefings to secure models of best practice at all levels in the face of changing personnel and evolving legislation and official protocols.
2. The second key task is to receive disclosure. Again, it has been agreed with the DBS that disclosure can be sent to a central clearing-house. Counter-signatories have the task of controlling the use of, access to and security of disclosures.

3. In addition, the countersignatories are required to ensure compliance to the DBS's Code of Practice, that any post or position for which a disclosure is sought is covered by the Exemptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and that disclosure is requested at the appropriate level.
4. For organisations using the Diocesan DBS umbrella body, the lead signatory will need to be assured that there is a secure and appropriate place for keeping information received. They will also have to agree to abide by the Code of Practice, and members of that organisation will need to come to the occasional training days organised by the diocese. They may use their own office as the place to receive disclosure information.
5. All countersignatories should acquaint themselves with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice and any relevant publications, legislation and guidance notes issued by the DBS or published on its website (www.DBs.gov.uk).

The role of Gloucester Diocese as Registered and Umbrella Body

Since the national agency became operational in 2002 the diocese has operated a dual service: it carries out its own DBS checks on all Clergy as part of the routine appointment process as well as Readers, PtOs and others as appropriate, and diocesan employees.

In addition, it acts as an “umbrella body” for parishes whereby they can obtain DBS disclosure under the “umbrella” of the diocesan registration. The Diocese makes no charge to parishes for processing disclosure applications on their behalf and therefore the only fee payable is that required by the DBS itself. (volunteer DBSs are free - there is a charge for employee DBSs).

From April 2002 it has been possible to check children’s workers, youth workers and relevant church leaders against police, DoH and DfEE records, using the Disclosure and Barring Service’s (DBS) ‘one-stop’ disclosure service for England and Wales. Access has to be through a ‘registered’ body and the Diocese of Gloucester has registered.

Application is made by the individual through local identification verifying regulations, and countersigned by the registered body. A copy of the disclosure is sent to the individual and copy to the registered body.

The registered body (The Diocese) confirms where an appointment can go ahead or where there are any issues to be further explored before confirming the appointment.

No appointment can be confirmed until the Diocese has confirmed the DBS outcome.

There is a process of appeal if an individual feels that the disclosure provided for them is inaccurate.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/DBS - for application guidance documents, online tracking and FAQs

www.direct.gov.uk/DBS - for information regarding the DBS process

www.businesslink.gov.uk/DBS - helpful information for parishes and employers