



social care
institute for excellence

Safer Recruitment in Faith-Based Organisations

Webinar and Your Questions Answered

23 March 2022

Session Outline

- What is Safer Recruitment?
- Why is Safer Recruitment important to me?
- What can happen if we don't get safer recruitment right?
- Stages of recruiting safely
- What to do if things go wrong
- Next steps in your safer recruitment journey



Safeguarding Training Fund

A safeguarding initiative with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), NCVO and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Between 2020 and 2022, SCIE are working with faith-based organisations to:

- Promote and champion safeguarding and safe culture
- Enable local networking and self-support
- Distribute and promote NCVO resources



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport



Safeguarding Training Fund

SCIE are doing this, at no cost to organisations, by:

- Bringing together experts in safeguarding in faith-based organisations, to discuss the challenges faced and help shape SCIE's work in the area;
- Offering local learning opportunities and networks through online and local events
- Disseminating and sharing the NCVO materials
- Providing training opportunities
- Publishing resources to support safeguarding practices



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport



Quick poll:

How confident are you of your safer recruitment policies and practices within your organisation?

- 1. Not at all**
- 2. Fairly confident**
- 3. I feel they are practice based**



What is Safeguarding?



Safeguarding is the process of protecting the children and adults that come into contact with us from harm through **safe** and **effective** care.

It includes all aspects of our work, from governance and leadership, recruitment, policies and procedures through to training and culture.

Child and adult protection are core parts of safeguarding about how we recognise and protect individuals who are suffering, or who are likely to suffer significant harm.

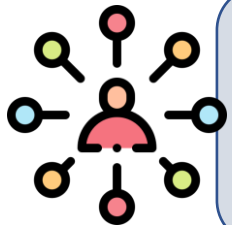
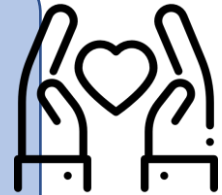
Why Safeguarding in Faith-Based Organisations?

People may turn to their faith in times of personal struggle, hardship, bereavement and loneliness and when they feel most vulnerable.



This may include when things happening in their lives make them unsafe.

Faith groups play a major role in the lives of adults, children and young people; nurture, respect and caring are central values in all faiths.



Faith organisations and their leaders have significant reach within their community, to influence change and support those in need



What is safer recruitment?

Safer recruitment practices help to make sure that staff, volunteers and trustees are **suitable** to work with others in the organisation and with beneficiaries. Safety should be considered at every stage of the recruitment process.

It's a vital part of creating a **safe and positive environment** and making a **commitment** to keep beneficiaries safe from harm.

Safer recruitment should be a **continuing process** of improvement for every organisation whose work or services involve contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Safer recruitment is also the method of designing your recruitment process to **deter unsuitable applicants** from applying for roles with vulnerable groups, and to identify and reject them if they do.

Why is safer recruitment important?

1. To attract the best possible individuals to all roles through **inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent** processes.
2. To identify and reject individuals who are unsuitable by following a **proportionate** but **thorough** selection process.
3. To ensure that **robust induction, oversight and supervision** processes are in place for those working and volunteering with children and vulnerable adults.

The hard truth is that unsuitable individuals, like Peter Ball, can exist in any job role, including in voluntary positions.

Abusers are often skilled at hiding their intentions and behaviour.

These individuals might regard your job advertisement as their chance to access vulnerable people.

National research with convicted offenders has shown that individuals will actively seek out opportunities with the least resistance when looking to abuse or harm others.

What can happen if we don't get safer recruitment right?



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Peter Ball

- His role evolved into direct work with children and young people
- No checks were made regarding previous convictions
- When convictions became known, no action was taken
- Seen as untouchable/beyond question
- Given free reign to act as he pleased
- No consideration of risk in his activities
- Reputational risk was considered as the priority
- Others became involved after observing his behaviours

Peter Stewart

- Recruitment was informal and did not consider access to vulnerable individuals
- No safeguarding procedures or training
- No safer working practices or supervision
- Spiritually abused his victims to gain access
- Was seen beyond reproach
- Attempts made to stop enquiries
- Poor procedures regarding disclosures
- Risks of disclosure to family

How can we ensure we recruit safely?

To carry out a safer recruitment process, you should:

- *Inform candidates of your **commitment** to safeguarding those in your care.*
- *Carefully **plan** your recruitment process timeline. This will ensure that you have enough time to thoroughly vet each candidate.*
- *Detail that applicants will have to **undergo strict vetting procedures** before appointment. You should make note on your job advert of all the checks you will carry out.*
- ***Carry out pre-employment checks.** This includes DBS checks, qualification checks, reference checks and identity checks.*
- *Ensure staff members are appropriately **trained** for their duties.*
- *Consider using **checklists** to aid the process.*



What are the stages of safer recruitment?

1. Safer Cultures (at beginning and end)
2. Safer recruitment policy
3. Preparing to recruit
4. Advertising vacancies
5. Shortlisting
6. Interviewing
7. Vetting and barring checks and assessing risks during checks
8. Induction and training
9. Policies and procedures including codes of conduct
10. Monitoring and supervision
11. Whistleblowing
12. Managing allegations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse
13. Exit interviews
14. Evaluation of process and implementation of improvements
15. Safer Cultures



Who is involved in safer recruitment?



Everyone!

- Previous post holder
- Line manager
- Team members
- HR staff
- Trustees
- Safeguarding Leads
- Service users
- Communications team

Advertising the role



When you are advertising any role you should consider including:

1. *A statement which confirms the **organisation's commitment** to safeguarding and safer recruitment on all written advertisements/notices. .*

Example: “[Insert name of organisation] is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are also expected to actively do so and will be assessed to establish their commitment

2. *The essential elements of the **person specification** required for the role.*
3. *The **pre-appointment checks** that are required for the role.*

Quick poll:



Does your organisation have a safeguarding statement and is it communicated at each stage of your recruitment process?

- 1. No, we don't currently have a statement**
- 2. Yes, we have a statement, but don't include it on recruitment materials**
- 3. Yes, we have a statement and its on our recruitment documentation**



Applying for the role

A **standardised application form** should be used for recruitment to all posts. CVs should not be accepted on their own.

Whether an individual is a paid employee or volunteer, access to an application pack and the completion of a standard application form is important in relation to safeguarding for the following reasons:

- It **reinforces the value** that the organisation places on work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and the seriousness with which it takes the appointment of those who work with such groups
- It gives a clear signal to anyone intent on abusing the trust placed in them that the **organisation is vigilant about the safety** and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- It enables those shortlisting to ensure they have the **same information** regarding each applicant

The application form should include important information about a **candidate's history**, including his/her experience of working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults and his/her motivation for working with these groups.

Shortlisting



The purpose of shortlisting is to identify, from their application form, those individuals **who best meet the selection criteria** for the role and who you wish to take forward to the next stage of the recruitment and selection process, which is often an interview.

Shortlisting should be conducted by **the person responsible for the appointment** and **at least one other person**.

Applicants should be shortlisted for interview **based on the evidence provided in their application form** and usually only those who meet all the essential criteria as defined on the person specification should be shortlisted

Application forms should be properly **scrutinised and any gaps** or queries (*eg in employment/education/church/volunteering history etc*) should be highlighted and marked for further exploration if the applicant is shortlisted and invited to interview

Candidates should be shortlisted by **comparing the information provided** on their application form **against the person specification** requirements.



Interviews and Assessment

An interview gives the opportunity to investigate the **individual's motivation for working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults** as well as explore his/her **past experience** of working with the relevant group, which may also reveal any indicators of concern.

- Interviews should be held **face to face**.
- Interviews should be held with a **panel of a least two**, one of whom should have been trained in **safer recruitment training** within the last three years, be competent in interviewing and possess the appropriate **expertise to assess the candidate's competence** in the role.
- Wherever possible, interview panel members should **not be related** to the candidate.
- Interviews should **explore issues relating to safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults through a combination of questions that encompass the organisations values and expected behaviours, with questions that focus on establishing skills, knowledge, qualifications & previous experience.
- Any **gaps, anomalies or discrepancies** that have been identified in the application form during the shortlisting process should be discussed with the candidate during the interview and a satisfactory explanation provided.

Pre employment checks

Carrying out pre-appointment checks is important for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults as it helps a body to **establish a more rounded picture of the candidate's suitability** to work with these groups, but these checks should **not be used in isolation**.

Consider:

- *When you will seek references?*
- *Seeking references from the most recent employer*
- *Checking qualifications*
- *Right to work in the UK*
- *Self Declarations*
- *DBS checks*



ELIGIBILITY

Criminal Record Check Eligibility Circles in Relation to Children, Young People (CYP) and Vulnerable Adults (VA)

NOT ELIGIBLE



ELIGIBLE

Group 6
Community

Group 5
Congregation

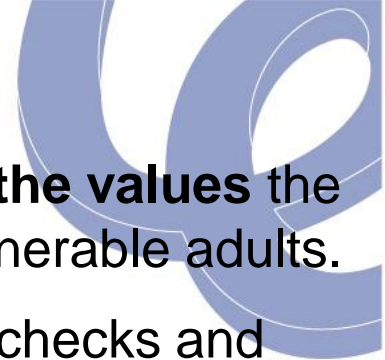
Group 4
Church workers with no CYP/VA contact

Group 3
Limited CYP/VA contact

Group 2
Substantial CYP/VA contact

Group 1
Regulated activity with CYP/VA





Appointments

Appointment documentation is another opportunity to **reinforce the values** the organisation places on work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

A **start date** should only be confirmed once all pre-appointment checks and actions are satisfactorily completed and verified

All **employees** should be issued with a **Contract** of Employment

All **volunteers** should be issued with a Volunteer **Agreement**

All those appointed should receive written statements of:

- *Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding, including the identity and responsibilities of those within the organisation with designated safeguarding responsibilities*
- **Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected**
- *Links to other relevant procedures/documentation eg whistleblowing and disciplinary procedures*
- *Those appointed should **sign the document** to indicate that they have received, understood and agree to adhere to all the written statements above*



Induction

A planned, proportionate and consistent induction process ensures that everyone in the organisation fully understands and knows how to follow safeguarding policies and procedures, and makes sure **expectations are clear and agreed.**

All appointments should undergo an induction process appropriate to the role being undertaken, **whether paid or unpaid**

Induction should include:

1. *Mandatory training and information about the organisations safeguarding policies and procedures, including **whom to report concerns***
2. ***One to one meetings** with the individual to whom the inductee reports*
3. ***Expectations in the role**, objectives and arrangements for ongoing support*

The induction process should be **evaluated** and reviewed regularly as part of the continuous improvement of the safer people management cycle.

Probationary Period

A **planned** probationary/settling in period should be in place for all appointments

During this period, **regular meetings** should be scheduled and prioritised between the responsible person and the individual.

Safeguarding (*process, understanding and behaviours*) should form a **core** part of these meetings.

Any safeguarding **concerns** should be thoroughly discussed and documented and appropriate next steps taken, including discussion with the organisational safeguarding lead for advice and support.

For employees, their contract and/or employee handbook should detail the grounds on which the **probation period can be extended or terminated**, which should include **failure to complete Safeguarding training, or failure to comply with the Safeguarding policy**

The probationary/settling in period should include an element of **direct observation** of the individual by an appropriate member of the relevant team in order to identify the appointee is demonstrating safe behaviours, maintaining appropriate boundaries, can spot causes of concern and knows when to report and who to.



Quick poll:

Are staff who undertake interviews within your organisation trained in safer recruitment?

- 1. Not currently**
- 2. Some staff are**
- 3. All staff who recruit to posts working with vulnerable groups are trained in safer recruitment**





Challenging behaviours of concern

- It is important that any concerns regarding behaviour are addressed quickly to ensure they do not become **accepted behaviour** within your organisations culture.
- All within your organisation should **feel safe to raise concerns** and should be confident that they will be addressed.
- All should be not only aware of how to raise concerns, but know that they will be **treated seriously**.
- Individuals should understand that they will be **protected** if they raise concerns.
- Any individual should be supported to raise concerns regarding a member of your organisation, irrespective of if that person is in a more **senior position** to them.
- All should be aware of **alternative sources of referral** to raise concerns if they do not feel they can do so within your organisation

Failure to address concerns can result in those undesirable behaviours becoming acceptable practice across your organisation and/or those who do not raise them possibly being viewed as being complicit

What can prevent safer recruitment and a safe environment?



- Culture
- Lack of curiosity
- Not thinking the unthinkable
- Status
- Power
- A view of those who give their time free of charge as being seen as beyond reproach
- Staffing shortages
- Concerns and disclosures not being followed up
- Lack of challenge
- Poor procedures
- Hierarchical structures

National Learning: IICSA



“A culture of vigilance ... depends fundamentally on engaging ‘hearts and minds’ from the leadership down through to the grass roots...”

Key findings:

- Although most organisations had some form of child protection policy in place, a large number did not have safer recruitment policies, which are required to support effective organisational child protection
- There was little evidence of religious umbrella bodies and representative organisations taking decisive steps to assist their member organisations with safer recruitment
- Concern about the quality of available guidance on safer recruitment within religious organisations and settings
- There remains confusion about the definition of regulated activity
- There are a number of organisations that continue to feel uncomfortable about asking volunteers to undertake checks
- Little training in safer recruitment was available

Implementing a plan

- Have a clear and communicated statement of commitment to safeguarding from your Senior Leadership Team and Trustees*
- Audit all of your roles for risk*
- Ask safeguarding questions at each stage of your interview process*
- Involve service users in your recruitment process*

- Ensure you undertake appropriate checks, including current employer references and DBSs*
- Ensure staff make a self disclosures on an annual basis*
- Have codes of conduct, for your staff, senior leaders, trustees and service users*

Implementing a plan

- Ensure you have an suitably qualified Safeguarding Leader who can advise on any disclosures made, either during recruitment checks or once a person is in role*
- Make sure all of your staff and volunteers undertake safeguarding training on an annual basis*

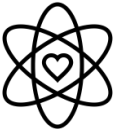
- Have clear whistleblowing policies that support and protect staff who share their concerns*
- Ensure you effectively tackle any issues related to the conduct of staff that could be abusive or neglectful*
- Consider devising a safer recruitment checklist*


Resistance to change?



Achieving good safeguarding including safer recruitment may seem complex, and resistance is not uncommon. **Consider:**

 Bringing people along with you on the journey and rationale for change?

 Giving clarity about how safeguarding and safer recruitment sits with wider values?

 Addressing feelings of mistrust and judgement?

Tackling practical barriers (eg understanding procedures)?

 Giving a clear imperative and directive for change?

Quick for reflection:



What are the barriers to change that you face in your role, if any?

What might help to overcome and address them, and who is needed to support this change?

Resources

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/steps-to-a-safer-organisation/choosing-staff-volunteers-and-trustees>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safer-recruitment>

To find out more about SCIE's work with faith-based organisations or to get in touch, please follow the links below.

SCIE and the Safeguarding Training Fund:
scie.org.uk/safeguarding/charities/resources

Safeguarding for faith groups:

scie.org.uk/safeguarding/faith-groups

Sign-up to SCIE's e-bulletin to find out about future events and resources:

scie.org.uk/myscie/register

Thank you!



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