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Volunteering Outline / Job Description

Recruitment and Selection Policy & Guidance

for Barnsley North West Methodist Church

To be read alongside:

Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance July 2023
Edition – produced by the Methodist Church

www.methodist.org.uk/media/30182/safeguarding_policy_and_procedures_for_the_methodist_church_in-britain_july_2023.pdf

Adopted by the Church Council on

30th January 2024

Updated & reviewed

May 2025



Introduction

For most people, the Methodist Church is a safe place free of any form of physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual or psychological danger. It is a place where children, young people and vulnerable adults are free from harm, discrimination and other harmful influences.

Sadly, for some members of the Church family, their experience has been of not being safe and this broken trust has left them physically and/or psychologically harmed. This Safer Recruitment Policy makes explicit our Church's commitment to establishing a worshipping and serving community that welcomes and is safe for all.

This policy sets out the necessary actions that the Church needs to implement in its recruitment and selection procedures in order to identify and deter people who are a potential risk to children or vulnerable adults.

Safer Recruitment is more than the undertaking of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. It is about promoting and exercising a safe culture including the supervision and oversight of those who work with children and vulnerable adults.

However, even the most robust selection and recruitment policy and procedures cannot eliminate every risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. That is why safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We must make it as difficult as possible for abusers to obtain access to children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is for this reason that once an individual is appointed, whether paid or unpaid, effective oversight arrangements are in place to monitor and respond to any concerns that emerge. I commend these procedures to you.

Responsibilities for Safer Recruitment in the Methodist Church

The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church sets out how Church Councils hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding including safer recruitment of all volunteers and employees in their environments. All churches are required to have their own safeguarding policy, which includes a commitment to implementing safer recruitment practices. It is part of the role of safeguarding officers, acting on behalf of each of those bodies, to promote and support safe recruitment.

If Barnsley North West Methodist Church intends to employ someone in a specific role then we agree to follow the guidance in the Connexional Recruitment Policy. Barnsley North West Methodist Church commit to following the '12 Steps to Safer Recruitment', as outlined below when recruiting volunteers or lay employees, as a means of ensuring that recruitment decisions are made with care and particular reference to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

The Twelve Steps to Safer Recruitment

Volunteer Roles

Step 1	Produce an up-to-date recruitment and selection policy that describes the process. <i>This document fulfils this requirement.</i>
Step 2	Ensure there is a Safeguarding policy, which is reviewed annually and includes a commitment to Safer Recruitment. Barnsley North West Methodist Church has already has a Safeguarding Policy in place, last reviewed on April 2023.
Step 3	Create a Role outline for a volunteer post or a role description and person specification for a paid post – see all Job Description (in chapel black folder or electronic copies). Stated on the Job Description is an outline of roles, time commitment, & requirements (DBS and Safeguarding training). Job descriptions should be used to ensure best practise.

Unconscious bias

Unconscious bias occurs when occurring people favour others who look like them and/or share their values. For example, a person may be drawn to someone with a similar educational background, from the same area, or who is the same colour or ethnicity as them. When writing a job description / person specification/ role outline for an established role, which has become vacant, take a step back from the existing staff member or volunteer and depersonalise the process. It is all too easy to characterise the position in terms of a particular individual's age, education and qualifications.'

The focus should be on being 'as factual as possible about requirements, steering away from the subjective'. The job description / role outline should be based on: the tasks and activities that the role is required to undertake daily, weekly, monthly and annually. It sets the expectations for the candidate to select and deselect themselves solely based on those facts.

Step 4	Advertise the role in a manner appropriate to the vacancy
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Advertising

Even volunteer roles should be advertised in a manner appropriate to the vacancy. This will ensure that suitable parties have a fair opportunity to come forward and will know who to speak to if they are interested. This could be on the church noticeboard, via a bulletin, online or highlighted during verbal notices at a service.

Step 5	Produce an information pack - Black folder (kept in the chapel vestry)
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Step 6	Consider each application fairly and carefully.
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Shortlisting

Scrutinise each application carefully and fairly with reference to the criteria for the role before carrying out interviews or discussions with candidates.

The Importance of Selection and Screening

Every year thousands of people volunteer. Almost without exception, these volunteers are keen to give up their time and efforts simply because it helps others. However, just because most volunteers act altruistically does not mean that volunteers don't need to be screened. Lack of care in accepting volunteers can lead to dissatisfaction and disappointment for both the volunteer and your organisation. In a very small number of cases, lack of care in selection could lead to serious danger for service users.

Good selection procedures recognise that the vast majority of volunteers deserve our best efforts to find suitable opportunities for them while also protecting vulnerable people.

Successful First Contact with Volunteers

Once you have started advertising your opportunities, you will start receiving responses from volunteers. How you respond to those enquiries is essential.

From the volunteer's point of view, they are offering you a gift – their time for nothing – so if you are slow to respond, unenthusiastic or unwelcoming you risk seeming ungrateful.

Top tips for responding to volunteer queries

- You need to respond quickly to any expression of interest from a volunteer. If there is a delay in response, apologise and explain why you did not reply immediately.
- Initial contact needs to be friendly, welcoming and enthusiastic.
- The person responding to volunteers needs to be well informed, approachable, able to answer questions and prepared to tell volunteers what will happen next.
- Answer all volunteer questions fully and give volunteers all the information they need to make an informed decision. Your goal is to give the volunteers the opportunity to get involved or move on if the role is not right for them. It may be best to do this in person or over the telephone rather than sending written information so that volunteers will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Step 7	Carry out appropriate checks is required.
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Appropriate Checks

If a role requires Safeguarding training it would be wise to liaise with the Church Safeguarding Officer to check if the candidate has done training in the past 4 years. If they have not, this is something volunteers should be made aware of **BEFORE** taking up the role.

Step 8	If you need to short list candidates then make sure they are treated fairly.
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Treating People Fairly

If several people are shortlisted for a post, it is important that all are treated fairly and with respect. If you have a candidate who is visually impaired for example, you will need to consider how you will supply them with the same letters or other necessary information.

The Methodist Church is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons when developing, co-ordinating and supporting volunteering. Although there is no statutory obligation under equality legislation, we recognise a clear moral obligation to promote fairness and equality in volunteering and value all individuals and their diverse & unique identity and backgrounds.

Step 9	Have a discussion or face-to-face interview based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification, job description or role outline
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Step 10	Ensure that all specific questions designed to gain required information about each candidate's suitability are asked.
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Face to face interviews or discussions

There is a temptation to simply accept a volunteer because they have come forwards and a role desperately needs filling. It is important however, that an honest conversation takes place so that expectations can be shared and any potential issues identified. Having a conversation before starting a role can prevent much frustration and bad feelings in the future.

For example, imagine your church is looking for new Service Stewards. Someone perfect comes forwards and they are quickly nominated and approved. As the Senior Steward, you notice after several months that the new person never offers to cover funerals, and other stewards start to complain that they are doing more than their fair share. You speak to the new Steward about this and at this point they tell you they care for their grandchild 5 days a week and are never available apart from weekends.

If this issue had been identified and explored prior to them being appointed their availability would never have been an issue.

Step 11	Select a preferred candidate based upon their suitability for the role.
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Step 12	Contact both the successful and the unsuccessful candidates.
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Next steps

Once the successful candidate has been chosen they need to complete any outstanding paperwork in their Information pack. For the majority of people this means obtaining a DBS check if the role requires one.

The following people are able to complete DBS check for this church and others in the circuit:

- Alison Padgett (tel: 07930 561210) alison@padgettatoz.co.uk
- Rev. Lyn Gregg (tel: 01226 663057) lyn.gregg@methodist.org.uk
- Rev. Claire Rawlinson (tel: 01226 780420) claire.rawlinson@methodist.org.uk

Appointing someone safely is a crucial part of protecting children, young people and adults who are vulnerable within our churches. Even more important is creating a culture of safety and the embedding of that culture in all our practices. Safer working protects everyone in our churches. Once the APPLICANT has been safely appointed, the group leader should provide / facilitate:

- support
- induction
- training in the role and in safeguarding including the requirement to report any concern
- reviews, building in periodic feedback from children, young people or adults with whom the APPLICANT now works
- clear boundaries for the role and guidance about unanticipated contact outside the work role
- oversight, supervision
- information about who they are accountable to and whom they are accountable for.

Saying No

You do not have to involve every volunteer who expresses an interest in getting involved. You may not have space for a prospective volunteer or there may be a good reason why you think they would not be suitable for the role.

If you do not want to welcome an interested volunteer, it may be tempting just to avoid the issue and hope that the volunteer will lose interest. Tempting as it may be, this gives a bad image of your organisation and of volunteering in general.

The best way forward when it comes to saying no is to let the volunteer know about your decision promptly and explain why.

Let them know that you appreciate their offer and be as honest as you can about why they are not suitable for the role. It is important to handle this sensitively. Think of how upsetting it is to be rejected after a job interview and how much upsetting it would be if you were offering to work for no pay.

If possible, suggest another organisation that might be more suitable. You can also refer them to us for support in finding a more suitable role.

If you require more information about Recruiting Safely or if you have any safeguarding concerns please contact Alison Padgett (NW Safeguarding Officer) on telephone 07930 561210 or email alison@padgettatoz.co.uk

This role outline was adopted by the North West Church Council on 30th January 2024 and reviewed 1st May 2025.