

St George's Church of England, Worthing

Policy Statement: Recruitment of Ex-offenders



St George's Church of England, East Worthing is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and volunteering. This policy statement outlines the Church's approach to the recruitment of ex-offenders.

Candidates are assessed on their skills, experience and qualifications for the role and criminal convictions will not be relied on as immediate grounds for refusal of employment or volunteering. Candidates will be required to disclose "unspent" convictions during the application and/or interview process. If the nature of the offence is relevant to the role they are applying for, the suitability of the candidate will be considered. In these circumstances, the church reserves the right to refuse to offer employment to the candidate or accept an offer to volunteer.

Information relating to "spent" convictions will not be required to be disclosed by the candidate, unless the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974.

The Church undertakes to treat all applicants for positions (paid or volunteer) fairly, while assessing their suitability for advertised positions both using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and also references.

The Church undertakes to comply with the UK Government's Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997, which advises that it is a requirement that all registered bodies must treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and not discriminate automatically because of a conviction or other information revealed.

To this end we will:

- not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed
- only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended)
- only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
- demonstrate our commitment to the fair treatment of staff, potential staff, volunteers, or users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background
- maintain a written policy (this document) on the recruitment of ex-offenders, and make this available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process
- actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records
- select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience
- only submit an application for a criminal record check to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position. In making these assessments guidance issued by the Church of England will be followed.

- ensure that all those in the Church who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences
- also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, eg the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- ensure at interview, or in a separate discussion, that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment
- make every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the UK Government's Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service and make a copy available on request
- undertake to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Review

This policy will be reviewed after three years or on the receipt of updated guidance from the Church of England or the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Approved by St George's PCC on 11 March 2024