

Safer Recruitment Policy

Introduction

CACS will undertake to safely recruit in every circumstance, paying particular attention to those working with children and vulnerable adults. This policy outlines the steps for safer recruitment:

- Section A concerns recruitment for paid positions
- Section B concerns recruitment for volunteer positions
- Section C concerns applicants for the CACS Spiritual Direction Formation Programme or CACS Reflective Pastoral Supervision Programme, and volunteer spiritual directors or supervisors.

Section A: Paid Positions

Pre-recruitment Preparations for Paid Positions

Job/role description and person specification

A formal and detailed job description and person specification for the role must be developed for any paid appointment

The job description should include:

- A detailed description of the work which reflects the specific nature of the role, as well as the aspect of the role that justifies the requirement for a DBS Disclosure (where appropriate).
- A list of responsibilities, including the responsibility to become familiar with national safeguarding policies and procedures and the CACS Safeguarding Policy.
- The duty to promote safe practice, minimise all risks of abuse and take action to report concerns and/or allegations.

Application Form

An application form must be completed by all those seeking paid work with children and vulnerable adults (adults at risk). The application form should also state that the role requires a DBS disclosure.

The application form should also include a request for the names and contact details of a minimum of two referees. For paid positions, one of their referees should be their current employer. The form should also ask permission for references to be taken prior to interview.

Applicants must seek permission from referees in advance of providing their contact information for the purpose of providing a reference.

On any application form it is important to state that:

- Identity will be verified, with additional details of whether this is to be done at interview, following an offer of appointment or, for eligible roles, as part of the DBS application process.
- A DBS in reference to all those offered employment will be undertaken, which checks criminal history and will be checked in respect of all applicants before any offer of appointment is confirmed.
- Any conviction which should arise during a DBS check or through self-declaration by the job interviewee will result in a risk assessment being undertaken by the safeguarding lead or deputy and the safeguarding project manager. The results will be discussed with the prior and shared with the potential employee.

Advertising or making the vacancy or position known

In advertising, it should be made clear that all roles require a DBS disclosure and at what level, and provide a link to a job, role or course description.

Interview

When shortlisting, the following should occur:

- Select suitable applicants for interview or discussion. For those shortlisted, a safeguarding self-declaration form should be sent for completion. Shortlisted candidates should be advised that the completed form should be brought to the interview or sent to the lead DBS processor, Fr Clement.
- For paid posts, a formal interview *must* be conducted.
- Both formal interviews and informal discussions should be used to assess the candidate's suitability, including experience and skills for the role as well as motivation and attitude.
- The interview or formal discussion should also be used to inform the applicant about the requirements of the role, expectations, time-commitment, training and support provisions.
- For paid positions, the completed Safeguarding Self-Disclosure (SSD) Form should be discussed at the end of the formal interview process or at another agreed time after

the interview. This process ensures that the applicant can provide context and explanation in respect of any relevant convictions.

- The discussion about relevant convictions is to be fully documented on the Safeguarding Self-Disclosure Form (SSD), which is used by the applicant to disclose relevant offences.

Referencing

For all posts, references from relatives are not acceptable.

All references should be sought directly from the referee; generic references or those addressed “To whom it may concern” are not acceptable.

Those appointing are responsible for satisfying themselves that references are authentic, and should follow up with the referee by telephone or face-to-face discussion in the case that:

- There are negative or ambiguous statements.
- There are gaps in information in the reference and further information is required.
- There is inconsistent information in the reference that you consider requires clarification.
- There are doubts about the authenticity of the reference.

If any safeguarding concerns arise on receipt of a reference, advice can be sought from the CSSA or RLSS, as appropriate

DBS Disclosure (or Equivalent Police Check)

Undertaking a DBS check

The Safeguarding deputy, Fr Clement, will be consulted about recruitment and the area of engagement/registration to determine what level of DBS disclosure or equivalent document is required. (Whether an Enhanced DBS Disclosure with barred list check is needed or, in the case of the administrative staff, a basic check.)

Kate Keefe, the safeguarding project development manager, will be consulted to ensure that other safeguarding considerations are considered at an early stage.

When an existing office holder, employee or volunteer transfers into a position that requires a different level of check, they will then be asked to undertake the disclosure application process.

If the individual indicates they have an existing DBS Disclosure Certificate and have subscribed to the online update service, any check made must be in accordance with the requirements of the DBS.

The CSSA National Database will be checked before any new application is made to the DBS, to determine whether an existing suitable check has already been made and whether relevant risk information is available.

If the individual needs a new DBS disclosure, the deputy safeguarding lead, Fr Clement, can advise on eligibility and the level of check required. 31:8 will give advice to the safeguarding lead about eligibility of roles matched to a DBS level.

The deputy safeguarding lead will initiate the application process, dependent upon the role of appointee. The application process will include ID verification and self-disclosure of relevant offences. The details of the application will be added to the National Database.

Safeguarding Self-declaration (SSD)

Anyone who is seeking to work with children or vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, must be provided with the opportunity to self-disclose relevant conviction information.

- For clergy, religious and volunteers and as part of the DBS application process, the completed Safeguarding Self-Declaration (SSD) should be handed to the deputy safeguarding lead or relevant person.
- The SSD will clearly indicate how information will be handled securely and how long the completed form will be retained for.
- For paid positions, applicants invited to interview will be required to bring the completed SSD, and as part of the process any relevant convictions will be discussed.
- Applicants should also be informed that the National Database will be checked in respect of all short-listed applicants.

Recruitment from overseas

It is not possible to undertake a DBS disclosure on individuals from overseas. It is, however, possible to undertake a "Certificate of Good Conduct" check from many countries. Once an individual has been in the UK for six months, a DBS disclosure is undertaken by CACS.

A "Certificate of Good Conduct" check is best obtained via the embassy or consulate of the country the individual is from if they are now resident in the UK, or two letters of good conduct from a Christian minister, lay or religious, and a professional who has known them for three years or more.

The following should also be considered:

- Not all behaviours of a sexual or violent nature that would be considered an offence in the UK would be in other countries.
- The age of consent and the age of criminal responsibility differ in many countries.
- Information supplied by an embassy or consulate may require translation.
- An understanding of criminal law in a country may assist a risk assessment.

A list of which countries provide a “Certificate of Good Conduct”:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

Guidance on the application process for criminal records checks overseas:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/guidance-on-the-application-process-for-criminal-records-checks-overseas>

Charging

CACS does not fund the cost of the DBS or police check process for overseas candidates; they should fund this process.

Security

Any records ref. DBS are stored by 3:18 in their secure database. Any DBS data or related paperwork such as risk assessments are stored in a password protected database, which only Fr. Alex, Judy and Fr. Clement have access to.

All sensitive data is stored on Monday.com, to which only authorised users have access. The secure database is protected with a two-way security verification system, and each document/folder with sensitive data is password protected. Only authorized users have access to this database and the documents within.

Conditions of Appointment

The following are required in order to appointment someone to a paid role:

- Uptake of satisfactory references
- Undertaking of criminal record disclosure (DBS, PVG scheme, Access NI, overseas) at a level as defined by CACS and the priory’s DBS policies
- Right to work in the UK
- Health checks (if applicable)

Appointment

Appointments should not be confirmed until satisfactory references and DBS disclosures have been received. Following appointment, the use of disclosures must not be viewed as the ultimate step in the process and should not replace the need for ongoing vigilance, careful supervision and sound management.

Employees should sign a document to indicate that they have received and understood the job/role/course requirement and agree to adhere to the CACS safeguarding policies and procedures. These are based on the CSSA 8 standards and secular regulations on safeguarding policies and procedures.

Induction and Probational Period

As part of the induction process, all new hires (contract or freelance) are required to review the relevant safeguarding and data protection policies, and a CACS DBS check must be in place before a contract is offered.

The initial three months of employment constitute a probationary period for direct hires. Upon successful completion of this period, the employee may be assigned additional responsibilities.

If performance during the probationary period is deemed unsatisfactory, a meeting will be arranged to discuss areas for improvement. In such cases, the probationary period may be extended by a further three months. Should performance remain unsatisfactory after the extended period, the employee will be required to resign from the position.

Arrangements for Agency Staff/Freelancers

Freelance staff will meet regularly with their manager, during which performance is assessed. The first month is seen as a trial period. Upon successful performance during this trial period, the freelancer will continue their duties. If performance has been unsatisfactory, the manager may decide to discontinue work with the individual.

Section B: Recruitment of Volunteers

Advice was taken from our safeguarding expert, Simon Bass, and 31:8, our DBS processing company, particularly regarding the level of DBS checks needed for volunteers. We have also paid heed to advice and policy guidance in training from the RLSS.

A database of all volunteers who require a DBS or equivalent check and a CACS Level II Safeguarding Certificate is kept on Monday.com.

Volunteers who do not need DBS checks in CACS or to undertake a CACS safeguarding course include:

- Readers at services
- Lay people who play the organ
- Those who may help with hospitality for occasional celebrations through serving drinks or food

Volunteers who must undertake a CACS Level II safeguarding course, an enhanced DBS and self-declaration form in conjunction with their DBS application include:

- Spiritual directors within the Sacred Encounter Ministry
- Pastoral supervisors within the Sacred Encounter Ministry
- Spiritual directors or spiritual companions within CSN
- Individual guided retreat leaders, accompaniers and supervisors

Section C: Recruitment of Applicants to CACS Programmes

SDFP Applicants

SDFP applicants require:

- An application form
- A CACS Level II Safeguarding Certificate. The course should be completed online within three months of joining the programme
- An identity check
- A DBS processed by CACS
- A police check for those living outside of England, Wales and Scotland, or a prescribed letter of endorsement which will stand instead of a police check for the first three months
- Two references
- An interview with the director of CACS (or his nominee).

Pastoral Reflective Supervision Programme Applicants

Pastoral Reflective Supervision Programme applicants require:

- An application form
- A CACS Level II Safeguarding Certificate. The course should be completed online within three months of joining the programme
- A DBS or police check
- Certification from CACS, SDFP or an equivalent programme, or experience in the skills and knowledge needed to complete the programme
- An interview with the director of CACS (or his nominee), if the applicant has not previously completed the CACS SDFP.

Volunteer Spiritual Directors or Supervisors

Volunteer Spiritual Directors or Supervisors (listed on the Carmelite Spirituality Network/Sacred Encounter Ministry) require:

- An application form
- A CACS Level II Safeguarding Certificate
- An identity check
- A DBS processed by CACS
- A self-declaration form ref their DBS. This should include a statement of any convictions, spent or still active
- A police check for those living outside of England, Wales and Scotland, or a prescribed letter of endorsement which will stand instead of a police check for the first three months
- Two references
- An interview with the director of CACS (or his nominee).
- Evidence of ongoing formation and engagement with supervision and spiritual direction.

Policy prepared by the CACS Safeguarding Team.