

PARISH OF ST MARY'S AMERSHAM WITH ALL SAINTS' COLESHILL

Parish Policy on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The Diocese has adopted a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders. Parishes will need to adopt a similar policy. A model policy is available below:

1. As an organisation using the DBS Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions involving working with children and vulnerable adults, the Parish of Amersham with Coleshill complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
2. The Parish of Amersham with Coleshill is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers and users of its services, regardless of race, gender, *religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical or mental disability, or offending background.
3. This policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders can be made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
4. We 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. In selecting people, we assess their skills, qualifications and experience.
5. A DBS Disclosure is only requested for eligible positions with children and vulnerable adults. For those positions where a DBS Disclosure is required, all application forms, job advertisements and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a DBS Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
6. Where a DBS Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to complete a Confidential Declaration at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within the Appointing Body and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
7. For eligible positions involving work with children and vulnerable adults we ask questions about the applicant's entire criminal record on the Confidential Declaration Form, as the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 provides that for this purpose no convictions are regarded as unspent. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
8. Under the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 it is prohibited to employ disqualified people from working in regulated positions.

9. At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. A risk assessment may be undertaken, when offences are disclosed, which takes into account the circumstances of the offence and the position applied for.
 10. We make the DBS Code of Practice readily available through the Diocesan website.
 11. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
 12. We have a procedure to deal with complaints relating to DBS Disclosures and the use of DBS Disclosure information.
 13. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.
 14. It is our policy that no-one who has been convicted or who has accepted a caution for a sexual offence against a child will be permitted to undertake regulated activity or have unsupervised access to children.
 15. A person convicted of, or who has accepted a caution for, any other offence against a child or vulnerable adult or for whom there are unresolved serious allegations outstanding will only be allowed to undertake regulated activity or have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults with the express agreement of the incumbent following consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and the police.
 16. A person known to be convicted of, or to have accepted a caution for, an offence against a child or vulnerable adult will be subject to an individual agreement defining attendance at worship and other church activities.
- See Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Genuine Occupational Requirements (GORs) Guidance¹

This summary sheet has been developed for parishes, who are wishing to recruit to a vacancy which may require a genuine occupational requirement (there is a genuine need for the jobholder to be a practising Christian in order to undertake the role). This guidance is relevant for PCC employees and volunteers.

What is a GOR?

In very limited circumstances it will be lawful for an employer to treat people differently if it is a genuine occupational requirement that the job holder must be of a particular religion or belief. When deciding if this applies, it is necessary to consider the nature of the work and the context in which it is carried out. Jobs may change over time and organisations should periodically consider whether the requirement continues to apply, particularly when recruiting (*ACAS Guide on Religion and Belief in the Workplace*).

Implications to think about when applying a GOR

These are the types of questions an employer needs to ask itself before applying a GOR. This list is not exhaustive, and employers should undertake further research and obtain further advice if required.

- GOR argument is limited to matters which are absolutely necessary in order to undertake the professional activity in question.
- Need to be able to demonstrate and justify the reason for a vacancy requiring a GOR and relate it to the overall ethos of the organisation.
- A central function of the job must reflect the GOR
- There are clear links between the Christian purpose and ethos of the organisation, described in the organisation context section, and the job as stated in this description
- The GOR is clearly featured in the list of the main tasks in the job description
- The knowledge/skills/experience required to carry out the GOR and so reflect the ethos are clearly stated in the person specification
- It is important to remember that (as the ACAS guide makes clear) employers should consider whether there are alternatives to applying an occupational requirement. For instance, if only a small part of the job requires a Christian then it may be possible to redistribute work or re-organise roles in such a way as to avoid applying a religious requirement to a particular post. Alternatively it may be sufficient for an employee to have some awareness/knowledge of the Church rather than active belief.
- Think about whether the GOR needs to be denomination specific – in many cases it is likely to be sufficient for the GOR to cover a practising Christian in the CofE or another member denomination of Churches Together in England.

Useful websites

ACAS Guide on Religion and Belief in the Workplace

This covers information in relation to the Equality Act legislation and the implications for employers to consider in relation to religion and belief. Appendix 1 provides detail on GORs and the things for employers to consider.

http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/f/l/religion_1.pdf

Diocese of London

The Diocese of London has a webpage about GORs and has listed seven main questions which employers should ask themselves before applying a GOR to a role
<http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/occupational-requirements/>

Examples of wording for Job Descriptions

The following are examples only of the types of wording which could be used/adapted to include in job descriptions and person specifications for where there is a GOR and/or duties reflected. Parishes and employers need to review the requirement for a GOR and include wording on the job description and person specification to reflect the actual requirements for their role/vacancy.

- Note: In accordance with the equality act 2010 it is a genuine occupational requirement that the post holder is a practicing Christian and we would expect our <job title> to adhere to our values as a church.
- There is a genuine occupational requirement for the successful applicant to be a committed Christian. It will be necessary to work on <number > Sundays, <number> Saturdays per month and some evenings. There will be a requirement to work on those Public Holidays which are also major Christian feasts.
- There is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for the job holder to be a practising Christian:
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 - Vibrant and active Christian faith: this is essential for the credibility and performance of this role
 - Secure understanding of the Christian faith and ability to engage young people in faith issues
- Committed to:
 - Being an active member of the church.
 - Prayer, evangelism, bible study and worship and to personal spiritual development.
 - Develop, communicate and implement the vision for youth ministry within the church and in the community.
 - Engage in the vision, prayer and pastoral life of the church and to contribute to church-wide events.
- Hours of employment: <number> hours per week, including Sunday mornings and some evenings. One designated free day per week.
- Participate in the delivery of “special” services and events targeted at families and children
- Attend PCC and other church meetings as required

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