

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**EX-OFFENDERS**

**The Parishes of**

**Bestwood Emmanuel and**

**St Mark**

Policy on Ex-offenders

As organisations using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants’ suitability for positions of trust, St. Mark’s and Emmanuel comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. Our recruitment procedures and policies are subject to the Canons of the Church of England.

We recognise our social responsibility and position within the community. We appreciate the role that continuity of employment can play in the rehabilitation of ex-offenders when matched to appropriate posts. A criminal record is not an automatic bar to volunteering or employment within these organisations. The specific details of each case will be considered on an individual basis. In each instance, we will determine whether a candidate has the skills and experience for the post, taking account of the impact of the criminal record upon the needs of the post.

Any application forms for positions where disclosures will be requested will contain the following wording:

*“This post meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, any applicants for this post who are offered employment or who become volunteers for this organisation will be subject to a criminal record check from the Disclosure Barring Service before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions. A criminal record will not automatically bar a person from successfully taking up this post.”*

We are committed to the fair treatment of our volunteers and users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

This policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made available to all who volunteer. 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. We select volunteers on their skills, qualifications and experience.

A Confidential Self Declaration form is always requested from our volunteers and this includes a disclosure of previous criminal convictions. This form will only be seen by the safeguarding co-ordinator and incumbent. We may also request two positive references.

As above, volunteers may be exempt from the “Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974” particularly when a post includes responsibilities for and working with children, vulnerable adults and financial management. We will, at all times, exercise extra vigilance and diligence when recruiting to these posts. We therefore require details of both “spent” and “unspent” convictions as defined in the Act. All involved in our safeguarding process are trained to fully understand how to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.

In any interview, we will ensure 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 the withdrawal of an offer of a position.

We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before declining the applicant a position at the Church.

This policy will be reviewed annually and the next review date is July 2017.

Signed …………………………………….

Church Warden

Signed …………………………………….

Church Warden

Date: 2016