



Volunteering in Confidence

A quick and comprehensive guidance for anyone who wishes to volunteer across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster (RCDOW)

Version 1

(RCDOW)

Safeguarding Service

Safeguarding Service - RCDOW

Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street, London, SW1P 1QN



Diocese of Westminster
SAFEGUARDING SERVICE



Why Volunteer?

Volunteering is an opportunity for people to offer time and skills for the benefit of others and their own fulfillment. Many people fit volunteering around careers and other commitments. Any contribution of time no matter how small is gratefully received.

Volunteering is...

- An opportunity for personal growth and to put faith into action
- A chance to give back to your local community
- A positive force for change, individuals and communities
- A way to help people in need

By volunteering you can...

- Make a difference to other people's lives
- Gain new skills and experience
- Be valued part of a team
- Build your confidence
- Meeting new people

For volunteering roles available across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, please do check the RCDOW website www.rcdow.org.uk or the Caritas webpage www.caritasvs.org.uk

How can I volunteer...?

At my local parish:

Speak with your Parish Priest to explore the roles available.

The Parish Safeguarding Representative in partnership with the leaders of activities/events can assist you to start the safe recruitment process. The candidate will be appointed once all the safe recruitment procedures have been completed.

At RCDOW events/agencies:

For volunteering roles at Caritas, Lourdes or other pilgrimages and/or other events of agencies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, the leads of these agencies should be involved and take responsibility for the safe recruitment process of all volunteers in cooperation with the diocesan safeguarding service.



Safe Recruitment of volunteers:

Safer recruitment ensures volunteers are suitable for the role. The Diocese of Westminster (RCDOW) safer recruitment process includes volunteer registration, references and if appropriate a DBS check.

Why do volunteers need to be checked?

All voluntary agencies working with children and/or adults at risk follow government guidelines¹ designed to avoid harm, or risk of harm, by preventing people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work or volunteering.

Do all volunteers need to be checked?

Not all volunteers need to be DBS checked, however the RCDOW safer recruitment process must be followed. DBS certificates are completed in partnership with the Diocesan Safeguarding Service.

How are volunteers checked?

1. The completion of a registration form, collection of 2 references including permission to manage data in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) Standards.
2. ID verification, self-disclosure and the completion of an online/paper DBS application which will produce a DBS certificate.

Can individuals with a conviction still volunteer?

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar people from working within the community. This depends on the nature of the position, circumstances and background of the offence.

Can young people under 18 be volunteers?

They can volunteer but they should never have the sole responsibility of a child/young person and/or adult at risk. Some young people aged 16 to 18 might be eligible for a DBS check and this is assessed on the role they are carrying out.

Can DBS checks from another organisation be used to volunteer with RCDOW?

As per RCDOW Safer Recruitment policy the Diocese requires a DBS to be undertaken during recruitment. If the applicant has a DBS from another organisation which is registered on the update service and is an exact match in workforce and barred list check for the volunteer role being applied for then it can be used as part of the safer recruitment process. The original certificate must be provided for the update service request along with ID matching the details listed on the original certificate and consent for the Diocese to carry out the update check. If these requirements are not met a new DBS certificate will be applied for.

Do volunteers go through safer recruitment when taking up a role at another parish?

For every role you take up with the Diocese of Westminster there will be safer recruitment procedures to follow. The process will take into consideration the role, the level of DBS and whether it matches the new role and your suitability for the role.



¹ Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

What is Safeguarding?²

We believe that all people should be valued, supported and protected from harm.

This is demonstrated by the provision of carefully planned activities for children, young people and adults; supporting families; caring for those hurt by abuse; ministering to and managing those who have caused harm.

It is because of these ministries that we need to take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment for all, which promotes and supports their wellbeing. This includes carefully selecting and appointing those who work with children, young people or adults at risk and responding robustly where concerns arise.

Safeguarding children and promoting their welfare is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Acting to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The Catholic Church in England and Wales committed to safeguarding adults by:

- Actively promoting the empowerment and well-being of adults through the church;
- Recognising that everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse; and
- Recognising that adults have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation

Recognising and responding to a concern or an allegation of abuse:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: anyone volunteering across the Diocese has a duty of care and therefore, must always share a concern or allegation of abuse.

In the parish – Any concerns should be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSR). Their contact details will be displayed around the parish and made available on newsletters and websites. The concern should be passed on as soon as possible after it has occurred/been disclosed.

Other RCDOW agencies - If volunteering for other agencies within the Diocese then, the concern should be passed to the designated leads of the agency who contact the diocesan safeguarding service immediately.

Immediate concerns – If a child or adult is in danger, this needs to be reported immediately to the police on 999. Alternatively, the 111 is the police non-emergency number and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Lead Volunteers, have a responsibility to ensure each of the volunteers supporting their programme knows the process for reporting concerns in line with where it is delivered.

Concerns can also be reported directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Service or the local children and adult services. Most authorities run an out-of-hours helpline, details of which can be found on their website.

To find out who is your local authority, please use the following link <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

² Taken from 'What is safeguarding?' CSSA, 22/01/2022

Creating a safe environment:

We want everyone to participate and thrive during the activities promoted by the parishes or any other RCDOW agency. Everyone that volunteers across the Diocese of Westminster has the opportunity and a responsibility to work in and provide a safe environment. Every volunteer is expected to be familiar with the 'Creating a safe environment' guidance, which provides advice on matters like filming and photographing, adult/children ratios, safer use of technology and more.

The guidance can be accessed on the CSSA – Catholic Safeguarding Standard Agency – at <https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/national-safeguardingstandards/national-safeguarding-policy/practice-guidance/>

Training and Support:

Advancing a 'Culture of Safeguarding'

All volunteers have access to free safeguarding training. The training is designed to keep you up to date with the latest safeguarding information and equip you to carry out your volunteering work. Refresher training every two years, is also included in the training program for volunteers.

Each volunteer should be offered support from their volunteering activity leads and an induction into the parish.

As part of your role you will be asked to read, sign and abide to a 'Volunteering Agreement' and a 'Code of Conduct' prior to taking up your volunteering role. These documents are necessary to:

- establish boundaries,
- explain the health and safety working practices,
- to understand what appropriate behavior around vulnerability groups constitutes, and to
- provide an ideal example that others wish to follow.

Useful links

Name	Website
Diocese of Westminster Safeguarding Service	https://rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/
Caritas Westminster	https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/
Evangelisation, Family and Catechesis	https://rcdow.org.uk/evangelisation/
Diocese of Westminster Youth Ministry	https://youth.rcdow.org.uk/
Pilgrimages	https://rcdow.org.uk/pilgrimages/
Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)	https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/



*"One of the golden threads
that runs through our Christian
faith is that of loving service."*

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Safeguarding Service

Diocese of Westminster

Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street, London, SW1P 1QN

Direct Dial (020) 7798 9359

Email: safeguardingsupport@rcdow.org.uk

