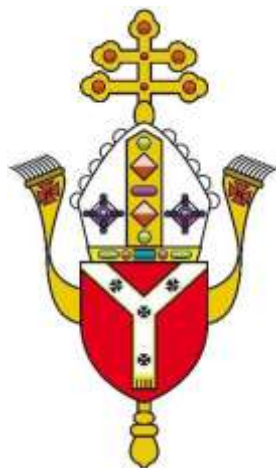


DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER



SAFER RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES – **SAFEGUARDING SERVICE**

Procedures prepared by:	Head of Safeguarding
Approval of The Directors of the Trustee	10 July 2026
Review Date	July 2029

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Diocese is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk. The Diocese ensures that anyone in a paid or voluntary role for the Diocese is safely recruited and for those that require a DBS to undertake their role are thoroughly vetted before they start and rechecked every 3 years thereafter.
- 1.2 This document sets out our approach to the safer recruitment process but should be read in conjunction with the related or referenced policies:
 - Diocesan Recruitment Policy
 - Diocesan Safer Recruitment Policy
 - [National Safeguarding Policy](#)
 - [GOV.UK DBS Checks for working with children in places of worship](#)
- 1.3 As part of its commitment to ensuring that children, young people and adults are kept safe from harm, the Diocese of Westminster will apply robust selection and appointment processes to anyone who is applying to volunteer, work or minister within the Church in a role which gives them direct access to vulnerable groups.
- 1.4 Reliance on a practice of untested trust is insufficient and we aim to adhere to the highest standards of practice and public accountability, while continuing to foster a spirit of trust and openness that reflects the values of the Church.
- 1.5 The Diocese of Westminster operates a 3-year re-check policy. All those in DBS eligible roles must have a DBS issued within the last 3 years.
- 1.6 Anyone who does not have a current DBS or refuses to be re-checked will be asked to step down from their role immediately

2. PROCESS FOLLOWED BY WESTMINSTER SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

The Diocesan Safeguarding Service safe recruitment process by role is outlined below:

2.1 CLERGY

- 2.1.1 The Safeguarding Service processes DBS applications for all Clergy with an appointment by the Archbishop of Westminster or in active ministry in a Diocesan parish.
- 2.1.2 Clergy include the following:
 - Diocesan Priest
 - Permanent Deacons
 - Overseas priests
 - Ethnic Chaplains
 - Religious Order priests
 - Transitional Deacons

These procedures also apply to Seminarians

2.1.3 Where the DBS is held by a member of a Religious life Community, the Diocesan Safeguarding Service may seek to confirm the presence of a valid DBS check for that clergy through other organisations, such as the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) or the Religious Order Safeguarding Lead.

2.1.4 The Safeguarding Service will work in partnership with the Vicar General's office to ensure new clergy appointments have the appropriate DBS and training prior to their appointment start date.

2.1.5 CLERGY RE-CHECKS

2.1.6 The Diocesan Safeguarding Service (SGS) regularly monitors clergy DBS status records through SafeSys and the PAMIS National database. The SGS will contact Clergy 3 months prior to the DBS renewal date to ensure the process is completed prior to the 3 years expiry with the option to escalate the matter to the Vicar General if the clergy does not respond to the reminder request.

2.1.7 TEMPORARY MINISTRY OF CLERGY FROM ELSEWHERE IN ENGLAND AND WALES AND FROM OVERSEAS

2.1.8 Temporary ministry of priests and deacons from elsewhere who have been invited for, or who request, temporary ministry in the Diocese whether for a one-off occasion or for a longer period are the responsibility of Parish Priests and Lead Chaplains to ensure that such clergy have the necessary documentation such as a valid Celebret and Testimonial of Suitability for Ministry issued by or on behalf of their Bishop or Religious Superior.

2.1.9 Parish Priests and Lead Chaplains are asked to notify the Vicar General of priests from elsewhere who are present in the Diocese and exercising public ministry whether for a one-off event or for a longer period, and are also asked to send the Vicar General a copy of the Celebret and/or Testimonial of Suitability for Ministry. Please contact the Vicar General if there is need for assistance.

2.2 CURIA AND PARISH STAFF

2.2.1 The processing of DBS applications for all new applicants undertaking employment for the Diocese in regulated activity will be initiated by HR following successful interview and provisional offer

2.2.2 HR provides the Safeguarding Service with a request to recruit form and job description including the applicants' contact details. The Safeguarding Service will contact the applicant to initiate their DBS application and complete ID verification. The Safeguarding Service keep HR informed of the status of the application throughout the process should the applicant have any queries.

- 2.2.3 Once the DBS process is complete the Safeguarding Service complete the request to recruit form with the date of certificate and date of renewal (3 months prior) and provide this to HR to action. Staff must not start in the role until this confirmation has been received.

2.2.4 CURIA AND PARISH STAFF RECHECKS

- 2.2.5 The Diocesan Safeguarding Service regularly monitors staff DBS status records through SafeSys and the PAMIS National database. The Safeguarding Service will contact staff 3 months prior to the DBS renewal date to ensure the process is completed prior to the 3 years expiry with the option to escalate the matter to the HR if the staff member does not respond to the reminder request.
- 2.2.6 HR send a monthly list of starters and leavers to the Safeguarding Service and this is actioned within the week of receipt to ensure staff records are accurately maintained.

2.3 PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVES (PSR)

- 2.3.1 The Safeguarding Service conduct a suitability interview with the candidate and if successful the recruitment process including in-person and online safeguarding training and DBS is initiated. More information is available [here](#).
- 2.3.2 Once the DBS process, online training and in-person Induction training is complete the Safeguarding Service notify the Parish Priest of the appointment and allocation of Diocesan email. Parish Safeguarding Representatives must not start in the role until this confirmation has been received.

2.3.3 PSR RECHECKS

- 2.3.4 The Diocesan Safeguarding Service regularly monitors Parish Safeguarding Representatives' DBS status records through SafeSys and the PAMIS National database. The Safeguarding Service will contact Parish Safeguarding Representatives 3 months prior to the DBS renewal date to ensure the process is completed prior to the 3 years expiry with the option to escalate the matter to the Head of Safeguarding if the Parish Safeguarding Representative does not respond to the reminder request.
- 2.3.5 The Safeguarding Service relies on the timely notification from Parish Priests / Lead Chaplains when a Parish Safeguarding Representative leaves their voluntary position.

2.4 TRUSTEES AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 2.4.1 The processing of DBS applications for all new Trustees is initiated by the Chief of Staff following successful application and interview. The Chief of Staff is then informed when the DBS process is complete.

2.4.2 TRUSTEES RE-CHECKS

- 2.4.3 The Safeguarding Service regularly monitors Trustee DBS status records through SafeSys and the PAMIS National database. The Safeguarding Service will contact Trustees 3 months prior to the DBS renewal date to ensure the process is completed prior to the 3 years expiry with the option to escalate the matter to the Chair of Trustees if Trustees do not respond to the reminder request.

2.5 VOLUNTEERS

- 2.5.1 The PSR will liaise with the Parish Priest and activity group leaders to ensure that all volunteers are recruited in accordance to the CSSA guidance: [Policy-Safer-Recruitment](#).
- 2.5.2 The PSR must ensure that Safer Recruitment application forms to confirm suitability are completed including application form, references and ID verification for all volunteers who require a DBS. Diocesan safer recruitment forms, job descriptions and further information on DBS processing can be found here: [Safe Recruitment & DBS Applications](#) Parish Safeguarding Representatives must not progress applications to the DBS stage until they are satisfied that the applicant is suitable for the role.
- 2.5.3 In addition, Parish Safeguarding Representatives can use the following tools to check which roles are eligible for a DBS:
- [DBS eligibility guidance - GOV.UK](#)
[DBS guidance leaflets - GOV.UK](#)
- 2.5.4 Parish Safeguarding Representatives must submit the application including all forms and ID via email to dbssubmissions@safeguardrcdow.org.uk. Applications that do not meet the requirements set out in the guidance on the website will be rejected.
- 2.5.5 Once the application has been accepted and entered into SafeSys, the Safeguarding Service will send the applicant an online DBS application for completion. The application cannot be processed by the Safeguarding Service until it is completed by the applicant. If the link remains unactioned it is automatically sent again up to 4 times within 15 days.
- 2.5.6 On completion of the DBS, the Safeguarding Service will email the PSR and / or the Parish Priest with an appointment decision, reminder to sign up to the update service and commitment for the new volunteer to undertake safeguarding training. Volunteers must not start in the role until this confirmation has been received and if breached the Parish Priest will be requested to immediately step down the individual.

2.5.7 CHANGING ROLE OR ADDING AN ADDITIONAL ROLE

- 2.5.8 Where a DBS volunteer changes to or takes on an additional volunteer role matching the DBS of their already appointed role and with a similar job description for their references (e.g. working with children) within their existing parish; The Parish Safeguarding Representative would notify the safeguarding service of the changes as soon as possible via the 3 year recheck or Parish Report.
- 2.5.9 Where a DBS volunteer changes to or takes on an additional volunteer role requiring a new DBS and / or working in a different workforce (e.g. appointed role is working with children and they will now be working with adults) within their existing parish; the Parish Safeguarding Representative will need to submit a volunteer application and references to support their suitability. The Volunteer should not take up the new position until their new DBS is complete and the Parish safeguarding Representative has been notified of appointment by the Safeguarding Service.
- 2.5.10 For DBS Volunteers that work across more than one parish, each parish will need to do their own assessment of suitability via references and application forms as these are approved by each individual Parish Priest. This does not include parishes officially merged or grouped by the Archbishop of Westminster.

2.6 NON-DBS PARISH VOLUNTEERS

- 2.6.1 Non-DBS Volunteers are appointed by the Parish Priest following informal interview and suitability discussion. Volunteer roles and responsibilities are managed by the Parish Priest, including application / contact details, suitability, induction and safeguarding training.

2.7 CURIA VOLUNTEERS

- 2.7.1 Curia volunteers are appointed by the Head of Curia Team and follow the Diocesan safe recruitment process for volunteers.

3. OVERSEAS CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

- 3.1 Clergy, Chaplains and paid staff who have lived overseas within the last five years for a period of six months or longer require an Overseas Criminal Record Check [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK](#)
- 3.2 The applicant can apply themselves, or Safeguarding Service can apply directly.
- 3.3 The applicant is to provide the Diocesan Safeguarding Service with evidence of applying for the Overseas Check within 2 weeks.
Or:
Safeguarding Service to apply directly and invoice the Parish / Chaplaincy.

4. PARISHES

- 4.1 The Diocesan Safeguarding Service will provide ongoing support to Parish Priests, PSRs and Parish Administrators on matters relating to the Safer Recruitment process, submission and record keeping process.

5. RELIGIOUS ORDERS AND CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

- 5.1 The Diocesan Safeguarding Service will process DBS applications for all Religious Orders and Catholic Communities aligned to the Diocese of Westminster.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Religious Order or Catholic Community Safeguarding Lead to keep DBS and training records of their members in active ministry up to date. Upon notification from the Safeguarding Lead, the Safeguarding Service will undertake the DBS process on their behalf.

6. ETHNIC CHAPLAINS

- 6.1 The Diocesan Safeguarding Service will process DBS applications for all Ethnic Chaplains aligned to the Diocese of Westminster. Where the Ethnic Chaplain works across multiple Diocese but are listed with the Westminster Year Book the Safeguarding Service will keep a record of their DBS and training.
- 6.2 The Safeguarding Service will share any concerns with the Diocesan Lead for Ethnic Chaplaincies who has Pastoral Responsibility

7. UMBRELLA AGREEMENTS

- 7.1 Umbrella agreements previously arranged via the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) are under review by the CSSA. In the absence of updated agreements, the Safeguarding Service will not process umbrella body DBS without an agreement with the Diocese.

8. DBS AND ADMINISTRATION FEES

- 8.1 The Diocesan Safeguarding Service do not charge any service fee for the completion of DBS. Parishes and organisations will be recharged the costs attributed by the CSSA for processing DBS application:
- An update check – costs £0 to parish.
 - A paid check (includes clergy) – costs £49.50 plus VAT
 - A volunteer check – costs £2.50 processing fee for CSSA
 - Overseas checks – If completed via CSSA vary in cost and would be advised on notice of application.

9. BLEMISHED DBS - WHERE THE DBS CERTIFICATE RESULT IS NOT PROVIDED ELECTRONICALLY

- 9.1 Where, following a DBS check, the Safeguarding Service receives a DBS notification from the Registered Body stating, “*see paper disclosure*” the internal blemished DBS process is activated.
- 9.2 The applicant is asked to provide their paper certificate without delay to the Safeguarding Service DBS manager.
- 9.3 Once the blemished DBS certificate is received, the manager records the information and undertakes an initial triage to assess the nature of the disclosure, any potential future risk and undertakes an initial discussion with the applicant to gain consent to share information.
- 9.4 Upon escalation, a risk assessment interview (either by phone or in person) is held with the Safeguarding Officer and the CSSA Blemish Risk Assessment form is completed. The Blemish Risk Assessment is then sent to the members of the Diocesan Blemish DBS committee for a decision on suitability within 14 days.
- 9.5 Responses from the panel members are forwarded to the Blemished DBS panel chair who reviews the replies and provides the Diocesan Safeguarding Service with the final recommendations/restrictions.
- 9.6 The Diocesan Safeguarding Service will inform the applicant and the Parish Priest, Superior or Manager imitating the recruitment process of the decision including recommendations/restrictions.

10. TRAINING COMMITMENT

- 10.1 The Diocese of Westminster has a commitment to promoting the culture of safeguarding in all that we do and everyone undertaking a role on behalf of the Diocese must complete safeguarding training. Details of the current offer can be found on our website here:
<https://rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-training/>
- 10.2 The required Safeguarding training for roles is listed below:
 - **Clergy** – Online and In-person Safeguarding training, valid for 3 years from date of completion
 - **Curia and Parish Staff** –Online Safeguarding training, valid for 2 years from date of completion. For new employees this must be completed within 6-month probation period.
 - **Parish Safeguarding Representatives** - Online and In-person Induction Safeguarding training during appointment to role, valid for 3 years from date of completion. In person Refresher Safeguarding training is required every 3 years, however Parish Representatives can attend annually if they choose to.
 - **Trustees and Diocesan Committee Members** - Online Safeguarding training, valid for 3 years from date of completion
 - **DBS Volunteers** - Online Safeguarding training, valid for 3 years from date of completion
 - **Non-DBS volunteers** - Online Safeguarding training, valid for 3 years from date of completion or Safeguarding Service approved Parish Led training, valid for 3 years form date of

completion.

- **Parish Volunteers under the age of 18** – are not required to complete safeguarding training

10.3 In addition:

- Document Awareness Training – provided by Metropolitan Police (when available)
- PSR Newsletter/Updates – produced monthly with DBS Matters section highlighting any new policies, procedures and frequently asked questions

11. SAFE RECRUITMENT DATA AND WHERE IT IS REPORTED

11.1 The following information is recorded on a quarterly basis and reported to the Safeguarding Committee, The Trustee board and the COO:

- Number of new applications received
- How many appointments made
- Number of Risk assessments carried out
- Clergy – Number with DBS recheck overdue/In progress
- Clergy - Re-checks needed
- Employees with DBS recheck overdue
- Employees - Re-checks needed
- Parish Employees - with DBS recheck overdue
- Parish Employees – Re-checks needed

12. SAFE RECRUITMENT RECORDS AND DATA RETENTION

12.1 Information pertaining to the DBS process is recorded on the following:

- Post log – record of DBS related post received at the Safeguarding Service office.
- SafeSys – Diocese of Westminster records - applicant contact information and DBS certificate details, training records
- PAMIS National Database – CSSA Records - applicant contact information and DBS certificate details
- KnowYourPeople – DBS regulatory Body – applicant contact information and DBS certificate details
- DBD Database (Archive) – diocesan forms stored in DBD archive and deleted once retention period reached.

Further information on retention can be found here: [CSSA retention schedule](#) and on safe recruitment forms used in the recruitment process.

A link to the Diocesan [Privacy Statement](#) is available on our website.