

St Michael's Church, Bishop's Stortford - Policy Statement on the recruitment or ex-offenders

1. St Michael's Church complies fully with the House of Bishops practice guidance, Safer Recruitment 2016, when recruiting staff and volunteers. This includes using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where legally entitled to do so for roles which involve working with children or adults when they are vulnerable. In doing so, St Michael's complies fully with the DBS code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. This policy is made available to all applicants at the start of the recruitment process.
2. We will only ask an individual to provide details of convictions or cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. This means where the role is eligible for a DBS certificate at standard or enhanced level as set out in the practice guidance, Safer Recruitment 2016. This is also applicable where a Basic Disclosure is required for this role. Where we are in any doubt as to whether the role is eligible for a DBS certificate, or whether we are legally entitled to ask an individual about convictions and cautions, we will seek advice from our umbrella body thirtyone:eight, formerly the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) who administer the DBS process on behalf of St Albans Diocese.
3. St Michael's Church is committed to fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
4. St Michael's Church actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those who have criminal records. All paid posts or voluntary roles in St Michael's will be risk assessed as to their eligibility for a criminal records check, in accordance with the House of Bishop's practice guidance, Safer Recruitment 2016. For those positions where a criminal record check is required, a confidential declaration as to whether there is any reason why the applicant should not be working with children or adults who may be experiencing abuse of neglect must be completed by the applicant as part of the application process. All application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate is required and that any offer of employment will be conditional on this being satisfactory.
5. At interview, or in a separate meeting, we will 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. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to a withdrawal of a conditional offer for the post/role.
6. We will make every person who is subject to a criminal record check aware of the existence of the DBS code of practice and make a copy available on request.
7. Whenever a confidential declaration form or DBS certificate indicates that the applicant has a criminal record, or has other information of concern, the details will be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for consideration by the DSA, and in more complex situations, the Diocesan DBS panel as to whether the criminal record is relevant to the applicant's suitability for the post/role. The DSA and the Diocesan DBS panel members are suitably trained in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders (for example, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) and to assess the relevance and circumstances of the offences.
8. St Michael's Church undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.