

Policy on recruitment of those with offending histories

The following policy was agreed at the Arborfield and Barkham PCC and Christ Church, Wokingham Church Council meetings held in March 2026, and will apply to all our churches, including Church at the Green.

We recognise that the Lord Jesus calls all members of his people to use their gifts to serve him by serving one another, and that for some this will involve teaching our children and young people about him, and by caring for the more vulnerable members of our church families and local communities.

In appointing people to particular roles within the church we will always consider whether they are in sympathy with our aims and beliefs as a family of churches. We also recognise the importance of doing everything we can to keep those we serve from harm.

Therefore:

1. As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order, using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Barkham Church complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
2. Barkham Church undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
3. Barkham Church can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Barkham Church is legally entitled to know about: ie where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested.
4. Barkham Church can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.
5. Barkham Church is committed to the 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.
6. Barkham Church actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.
7. Barkham Church selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

8. An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all role descriptions, application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
9. Barkham Church ensures that those involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained and receive suitable support to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
10. Barkham Church also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
11. At interview, or in a separate discussion, Barkham Church and/or Oxford Diocese ensures 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 withdrawal of an offer of appointment and/or employment.
12. Barkham Church makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and makes a copy available on request.
13. Barkham Church undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of appointment and/or employment.

Signed Minister of Barkham:

Churchwarden:

Churchwarden:

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