



# Safe Church Recruitment Process

This list provides a series of practical steps to help ensure that processes to recruit, employ or appoint staff and volunteers in child-related roles include appropriate consideration of child safety issues. It is taken from the National Safe Church Unit document on Child Safe screening.

## 1. Developing the role description

- Outline how much contact with children and young people, direct and/or indirect, the role holder will have
- Identify what responsibilities for children and young people the role holder will have
- Identify what responsibilities the role holder will have for other people working with children and young people, including if these people are expected to be volunteers
- Identify if the role holder will interact with children and young people who have particular needs, including access, cultural or language needs

## 2. Advertising the role

- Include the Church's commitment to child safety
- Clearly state that the recruitment process will include the screening process in line with the relevant legislation and a police check
- Highlight that securing the role is subject to a positive outcome from these checks
- Include a request for applicants to provide professional referees, including the current person they formally report to
- For volunteer positions request character references
- Include an understanding of relevant child safety legislation and practice as a selection criterion when relevant to the advertised role
- Include a commitment to the Principles of a Child Safe Uniting Church in Australia as a selection criterion for all advertised roles

## 3. Selecting candidates for interview

- Be mindful that applicants who have worked or volunteered in different states and/or countries will require police checks from each different jurisdiction
- For paid roles, consider if career progress is considered to be a usual pattern, lack of career progression can indicate workplace issues
- If an individual is choosing, or appears to be taking, a step-down in their paid career in order to work with children and young people consider why this might be the case
- Be mindful that a prior history of violence poses a potential risk, even if not child related, and may have implications on an organisation's insurance



## 4. Preparing for interviews

- Individuals should not be appointed to paid or volunteer roles without an interview
- Where possible interviews should be conducted in person with an interviewing panel
- The interviewing panel should be a diverse mix of gender, ages and skills set
- Ensure interviews are accessible to candidates who have specific needs

## 5. Interviews

- Include interview questions about child safety, including about relevant legislation and organisational policy
- Use de-identified case studies or scenarios that would require the role holder to address child safety issues
- If the role is offered ensure the offer is conditional to the applicant/organisation securing a satisfactory outcome of a working with children check, a policy check and referee checks

### ***Dependent on the role, the following questions may be appropriate:***

- Ask candidates what child/young person behaviours may suggest child safety concerns
- Ask questions about adult behaviours of concern and how the candidate would address them
- Ask candidates about their motivation to work/volunteer with children and young people
- Ask about any gaps in employment
- If a candidate has not provided their current employer/manager as a referee, ask why not

## 6. Screening – working with children check and police check

### ***Dependent on the role, screening could include:***

- A Working with Child Check in line with relevant state/territory legislation
- If the role is a national role the Working with Children Check will ordinarily be done in the state/territory that is considered to be the primary workplace
- National police check
- International police check if the candidate has lived and/or worked or volunteered overseas for a significant period of time
- For paid positions, reference checks with at least two previous employers; ask specific questions about the candidate's work with children and young people and how they responded to the individual
- For volunteer roles, referee checks with organisations the candidate has volunteered with; ask specific questions about the candidate's volunteering with child and young people and their responses to the individual
- The internet can be another source of information, such as LinkedIn or social media



## 7. Appointment

- An appointment is made once the candidate has satisfied all screening criteria
- The letter of offer/volunteer agreement used by the Synod should include provisions that require the appointee to:
  - provide immediate notification of any child related charges or offences
  - maintain a valid working with children check
  - understand that the employer retains the right to step-down or dismiss the individual from the appointed role if they breach any of the organisation's child safety policies or codes of conduct

## 8. Induction and ongoing employment/engagement

- The induction process should emphasise the Church's child safe culture and set out the behavioural expectations for staff and volunteers who work with children
- Information should be provided about access to child safe education and training
- Child safety should be a regular item for discussion between staff/volunteers and their managers/mentors, including in formal performance appraisal and supervision