

Safer Recruitment in Mothers' Union

The most important part of safeguarding is making sure that everyone who volunteers to be involved in activities with children and adults at risk does so through a safer recruitment procedure and receives an appropriate level of training.

In the majority of situations with safeguarding implications, Mothers' Union members and volunteers will be recruited and trained either through the procedures of the Anglican diocese/province or an external partner, such as a school, contact centre or prison.

This process only applies where the activity is solely the responsibility of Mothers' Union.

The Safer Recruitment guidance may seem rather formal, with personal details, confidential declarations and references, but this ensures that Mothers' Union at provincial, diocesan and local level is taking all reasonable steps to prevent those who should not be working with children or adults at risk from doing so under the auspices of the organisation.

Four Steps to Safely Recruit Volunteers



Step 1:

Know what you want the volunteer to do by creating a simple role outline including the tasks and responsibilities. This will also help you to identify whether a criminal records check is required. In simple terms, those who have regular or substantial contact with children and adults at risk on a regular basis will need an enhanced criminal records check, but take advice from your diocesan/provincial safeguarding adviser.

Step 2:

Tell people about the volunteering opportunities. Spreading the word wider than existing members can publicise what Mothers' Union does and attract new people to join us. Give those who are interested a Volunteer Information and Self Declaration Form, the role outline, an explanation of the recruitment and checking procedures you will be applying and the training volunteers will be asked to undertake. ALL volunteers need to be recruited through the Safer Recruitment procedure – even Mothers' Union members.

Step 3:

Have an informal discussion with potential volunteers so they are clear about what they are taking on and you can assess their suitability. Take up references and, if required, start the criminal record checking process.

Step 4:

Once satisfactory references have been obtained and any necessary criminal records checks are completed, welcome the volunteer into their new role. Make sure they are aware of the signs of abuse and how to respond to a safeguarding concern or allegation. The Mothers' Union document *Responding to Safeguarding Concerns* provides basic information and guidance. Arrange for the volunteer to receive the appropriate level of safeguarding training.

In the **Church of England**, Basic Awareness Safeguarding training is available free of charge online (<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>) and is recommended for anyone who needs a basic level of awareness of safeguarding. Foundation training is required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities or contact with children and/or adults at risk.

Those who are leaders of activities involving children or adults at risk will need Leadership training, and you should contact your Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser to ask if Mothers' Union volunteers can access this.

In the **Church in Wales**, the **Scottish Episcopal Church** and the **Church of Ireland**, you should get in touch with your Diocesan or Provincial Safeguarding Adviser to ask about accessing training for Mothers' Union volunteers.

What about existing volunteers?

If existing volunteers have not been recruited through safer recruitment procedures, they should be asked to complete the Volunteer Information form and Self Declaration Form. References are not required for those who have been engaged in that activity for more than 12 months. If the role requires it, they also need to have the appropriate DBS or criminal record check. All volunteers are required by Mothers' Union to have their DBS certificate or criminal record check renewed every three years

Model Volunteer Role Outline

Role Title	<i>Examples: Toddler Group Organiser/ AFIA Holiday Helper</i>
Location	<i>Where the activity usually takes place , for example, the name of the Church Hall</i>
When	<i>Examples: Wednesday afternoons 2.00 – 3.30 pm Is it every week or on a rota? Dates for a specific activity</i>
Responsible to:	<i>Role Title of Activity Leader or the person a Leader reports to</i>
Tasks	<i>What you want the volunteer to do Examples: Welcome and register carers/children to the group Help with the preparation of refreshments Assist with craft activities and games (under supervision) Lead simple worship</i>
Attributes	<i>Examples: Able to talk to a range of people from different backgrounds Adaptable and willing to do a range of tasks</i>
Safeguarding statement	<i>Applicants must complete self declaration form, give the names of 2 referees and have criminal record (DBS) checks as appropriate. They must also agree to undertake relevant safeguarding training.</i>

Volunteer Information Form

For those wishing to work with children or adults at risk

Volunteer Role	
Full Name:	
Previous Name (s)	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Post code	
Tel No	
Email	
How long have you lived at the above address? If less than 12 months, please give your previous address	
Please give examples of previous experience that will support this application.	
Are you willing to undertake safeguarding training appropriate to this role?	

Please provide the names and addresses of two people who have known you for at least two years (not close relatives) and would be able to provide a personal reference:

Name	Name
Address	Address
Post code	Post code
Tel No	Tel No
Email	Email
Optional Information In case of a medical or similar emergency, please give the contact details of someone we could contact:	
Signature	
Date	

Self-declaration Form

Complete this form and return it to the person detailed below in a separate sealed envelope.

Explanatory notes are given on the attached sheet.

This form is strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law, will be seen only by those responsible for the appointment and, when appropriate, the diocesan safeguarding adviser or someone acting in a similar role.

All forms will be kept securely in compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations effective from 25th May 2018 and all other relevant legislation and the expectations of the Information Commissioners Office relating to the data privacy of individuals

Volunteer role:

Have you ever been convicted of or charged with a criminal offence or been bound over to keep the peace that has not been filtered in accordance with the DBS filtering rules? Include both 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions (see Note 1)

Yes No (please tick)

Have you ever received a caution, reprimand or warning from the police that has not been filtered in accordance with DBS filtering rules (see Note 2)?

Yes No (please tick)

If you have ticked yes to either of the above, read Note 3 and then give details here

Are you at present (or have you ever been) under investigation by the police or an employer or other organisation for which you worked for any offence/misconduct?

Yes No (please tick)

Are you or have you ever been prohibited and/or barred from work with children and/or vulnerable adults?

Yes No (please tick)

Has a family court ever made a finding of fact in relation to you, that you have caused significant harm to a child and/or vulnerable adult, or has any such court made an order against you on the basis of any finding or allegation that any child and/or vulnerable adult was at risk of significant harm from you? (see Note 4)

Yes No (please tick)

Has your conduct ever caused or been likely to cause significant harm to a child and/or vulnerable adult and/or put a child or vulnerable adult at risk of serious harm? (see Note 4)

Yes No (please tick)

To your knowledge, has it ever been alleged that your conduct has resulted in any of those things?

Yes No (please tick)

Have you ever had any allegation made against you, which has been reported/referred to , and investigated by the Police/Social Services/Social Work Department (Children or Adult Social Care)?

Yes No (please tick)

Has a child in our care or for whom you have or had parental responsibility ever been removed from your care, been placed on the Child Protection Register or been the subject of child protection planning, a care order, a supervision order, a child assessment order or an emergency protection order under Children Act 1989, or a similar order under any other legislation?

Yes No (please tick)

If you are working from home with children, is there anyone who is 16 years of age or over living or employed in your household who has ever been charged with, cautioned or convicted in relation to any criminal offence not subject to DBS filtering rules, or is that person at present the subject of a criminal investigation/pending prosecution? This only applies if some or all of your work with children or adults is carried out at the place where you live.

Yes No Not applicable (please tick)

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above, please give details of the complaints, allegations, offences, including dates. Please give any further details such as the reasons or circumstances which led to the offence or allegation. All these matters will be checked with the relevant authorities.

Declaration

I declare the above information (and that on any attached sheets) is true, accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

After I have taken up my role, I agree to inform the activity leader if I am charged, cautioned or convicted of any offence or if I become subject to a Police/Social Services/Social Work Department (Children or Adult's Social Care) investigation.

Signed:

Full name:

Date of Birth

Address:

Date:

Please return this form to:

Before taking up a role, those who will have substantial contact with children and/or adults at risk of abuse or neglect in their roles will be required to have an enhanced criminal record check (with or without a barred list check, as appropriate) from the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales or the equivalent criminal records body in other parts of Britain & Ireland.

All information declared on this form will be carefully assessed to decide whether it is relevant to the role in question and will only be used for the purpose of safeguarding children, young people and/or adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

Please note that the existence of a criminal record will not necessarily prevent a person from taking on a role. It is only if the nature of any matters revealed may be considered to place a child and/or a vulnerable adult at risk.

Explanatory Notes for checks in England & Wales

Note 1 Declarations and Spent Convictions

You do not have to declare any adult conviction where:

- a) 11 years (or 5.5 years if under 18 at the time of the conviction) have passed since the date of the conviction;
- b) it is your only offence
- c) it did not result in a prison sentence or suspended prison sentence (or detention order) and
- d) it does not appear on the DBS's list of specified offences relevant to safeguarding (broadly violent, drug related and/or sexual in nature)

Please note that a conviction must comply with a), b), c) and d) in order to be filtered.

Further guidance is provided by the DBS and can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/filtering-rules-for-criminal-recrd-check-certificates and www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance

Please note that the 'rehabilitation periods' (i.e. the amount of time which has to pass before a conviction etc can become 'spent') have been amended by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. Since March 2014, custodial sentences greater than four years are never 'spent'. For further guidance in relation to the 'rehabilitation periods' please see <http://hub.unlock.org.uk/knowledgebase/spent-now-bried-guide-changes-roa/>

Note 2: DBS Filtering Rules

You do not have to declare any adult caution where:

- a) 6 years (or 2 years if under 18 at the time of the caution, reprimand or warning) have passed since the date of the caution etc and
- b) it does not appear on the DBS's list of specified offences referred to in Note 1 above. **Please note that a caution etc must comply with a) and b) in order to be filtered.**

Note 3: Details of convictions

Please give details of all convictions, cautions, warnings and reprimands, etc that are not subject to the DBS filtering rules. Please also provide details of the circumstances and/or reasons that led to the offence(s).

If you wish to work in a role that involves substantial contact with children and/or adults at risk and you are eligible for an enhanced criminal records (DBS) check, you are expected to declare all convictions and/or cautions, etc even if they are 'spent', provided they have not been filtered by the DBS filtering rules.

If the role does not involve substantial contact with children and/or adults at risk, you should only declare 'unspent' and 'unfiltered' convictions, cautions, etc.

Convictions, cautions etc and the equivalent obtained abroad must be declared as well as those received in the UK.

If you are unsure of how to respond to any of the above, please seek advice from an appropriate independent representative (eg your solicitor) because any failure to disclose relevant information could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with children and/or adults at risk.

The existence of a conviction, caution etc will not necessarily bar you from working with vulnerable groups unless it will place such groups at risk.

Note 4: Significant Harm

'Significant harm' involves serious ill-treatment of any kind including neglect, physical, emotional or sexual; abuse, or impairment of physical or mental health development. It will also include matters such as a sexual relationship with a young person or adult for whom an individual had pastoral responsibility or was in a position of respect, responsibility or authority, where he/she was trusted by others. It also includes domestic abuse.

Reference Letter & Form

Dear

[name and address of applicant]

The above person has given your name as someone who may be contacted in relation to his/her application to volunteer as {role} at [activity].

As a organisation concerned with Christian principles and ministry in family life, the nurture and protection of children and adults at risk is at the heart of Mothers' Union and as an organisation, we have a duty to protect them, doing everything possible to ensure that they are safe when involved in Mothers' Union activities. As a result, we ask for references for all those volunteering in these activities.

I should be grateful if you could complete the enclosed form and return it to me. If you have any queries or wish to speak to me, you may contact me by telephone on [telephone number].

I am sure you will recognise that these are sensitive matters but it is standard for questions like these to be asked about everyone who works with children or adults at risk, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. The information in your response will be treated with the utmost confidence.

Thank you for your help

Yours sincerely

[name of person requesting reference]

[role]



Reference form for those seeking to work with children or adults at risk

Name of applicant:
Role applied for:

Please fill in this form to the best of your ability and return it to:
[Name/role/address]

If you have any questions about this form, please contact [the above]

How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?
.....
.....

Please describe any previous experience of looking after or working with children/adults at risk that the applicant has
.....
.....

Does the applicant show an ability to provide kind, consistent and safe care and an understanding of appropriate boundaries and behaviour when working with children/adults at risk?
.....
.....

Does the applicant show a willingness to treat all children/adults regardless of background and/or culture with equal concern?
.....
.....

Does the applicant show a commitment to treat all children/adults at risk of abuse or neglect as individuals and with equal concern?
.....
.....

Please outline why you feel the applicant would be suitable to work with children/adults at risk
.....
.....

To your knowledge, has the applicant's conduct ever caused or been likely to cause harm to a child/adult at risk or put a child/adult at risk?

Signature:
Print Name
Date