

AWA Recruitment Safeguarding Policy

APAs are authorised by incumbents with the consent of the PCC to carry out particular ministries within the parish. As such, they hold a position of trust, who will often be perceived by others, both inside and outside the church, to have recognised status as representatives of the church. Before accepting someone to train as an APA, the diocese therefore requires that good safeguarding practice is followed, beginning with safer recruitment.

APAs are required to complete the Basic Awareness, Foundation, and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse online safeguarding training modules, before the Incumbent applies for authorisation.

Basic Safer Recruitment

The 2021 national Safer Recruitment and People Management Policy, adopted by the diocese, should be followed.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance>

In recording the PCC's support of the applicant, acknowledgement of the references should be included in the minute. Wording such as this is suggested.

"This PCC supports the application of N. to be an Authorised Pastoral Assistant in this parish and commends them to the diocese for training. It has received satisfactory references for them to serve as an APA, which attest to their good character, and give assurance there is no reason why they should not serve this parish as an APA."

A copy of the minute, with the date of the meeting, should be included with the application form. In compliance with the Safer Recruitment policy, where an APA moves parishes, and is in due course considered for authorisation in their new parish, one reference shall be taken up from the incumbent of the previous parish, or if that parish is in vacancy, another appropriate minister or church officer, such as an SSM, LLM or churchwarden.

DBS checks

APAs require an enhanced DBS check with barring.

Each APA should have a basic role description which may vary from parish to parish.

The role description shall include this wording:

- i. *To provide pastoral care on behalf of the church to those who are in need of spiritual, physical, emotional or psychological support. To offer encouragement, advice, and practical support to those with temporary or long-term illnesses, disabilities or needs.*

Included in the role description should be:

- ii. *Where churches have a transport scheme, and APAs provide transport to and from church, or to medical or care appointments: (Guidance indicates that the*

person should be over 25, have held a clean driving licence for 2 years and have relevant insurance - business travel).

Also included in the role description should be:

- iii. Where APAs are visiting care homes, or housebound individuals, on a regular basis, either as a pastoral visit, or to take Holy Communion

Review and Reauthorisation

It is good practice to review role descriptions of all voluntary ministries annually, including those with an enhanced check.

The period for which an APA is authorised shall be the same number of years as a DBS check remains valid, before requiring renewal (currently 3 years).

All APAs are required to be up to date with their safeguarding training.

Before reauthorisation, therefore (and supported by the diocesan safeguarding team) the PCC and incumbent shall ensure the APA's training record is fully updated.

A more thorough review leading either to a reauthorisation process for a further period, or a grateful recognition of a ministry now ending, should be carried out at this point with the incumbent.