

Volunteer Policies relating to the use of criminal records information regarding:

Recruitment (including ex-offenders), Equal Opportunites and Reporting

Storage, handling, use, retention & disposal of disclosures and disclosure of information

Maybridge Community Church confirms our commitment to recruit all staff and volunteers in accordance with “Safe from Harm” principles, the Disclosure and Barring service “Code of Practice” and legislative requirements.

In particular, we have adopted an equal opportunities policy and a policy on the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosure information in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly Criminal Records Bureau) code of Practice.

Recruitment (including ex-offenders) and Equal Opportunities

1. We are committed to providing a vital, practical response to the needs of those we serve, regardless of race, religion, lifestyle, gender, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor.
2. As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the church undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice (copy available) and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
3. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all, with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of people, including those with criminal records. We make our selections based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values of the organisation.
4. A Criminal Record check is only requested where it is relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Criminal Record check is required (ie those working with children, young people, and/or vulnerable adults), the volunteer recruitment process will make it clear that a Criminal Record check will be requested.
5. Where a Criminal Record check is to form part of a recruitment process, we request that volunteers provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.
6. Unless the nature of the position allows Maybridge Community Church to ask questions about an applicant's entire criminal record, we only ask

about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. However, positions involving access to children, young people, the elderly, disabled people, alcohol or drug misusers and the chronically sick are exempted from the provisions of this Act. This means checks will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions.

7. We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of circumstances of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders eg the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
8. We ensure 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 the offer of voluntary work.
9. We make every applicant of a Criminal Record check aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar people from working with us. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

Reporting

The church will promptly report to the DBS any volunteer whose services are no longer used for regulated activity and the DBS referral criteria are met; that is, they have caused harm or posed a risk of harm to a child/young person/vulnerable adult.

Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure of Information

1. **General Principles.** As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for a position of trust, Maybridge Community Church complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention, and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018) and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to all those who wish to see it on request.
2. **Storage and access.** Criminal Record check information is always kept separately and securely, **in lockable, non-portable, storage containers** with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. Related electronic information is deleted as soon as possible so that only paper records are kept. While electronic

information is waiting to be deleted, access is only available using passwords.

- 3. Handling.** In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Criminal Record check information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Criminal Record check information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.
- 4. Usage.** Criminal Record check information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.
- 5. Retention.** Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Criminal Record check information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Criminal Record check information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS and will give full consideration to the GDPR and Human Rights individual subject access requirements before doing so. Throughout this time the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.
- 6. Disposal.** Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Criminal Record check information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure means, ie by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Criminal Record check information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (eg waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Criminal Record check or any copy or representation of the disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, a record of the date of the issue of a Criminal Record check, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the position for which the Criminal Record check was requested, the unique reference number of the Criminal Record check and the details of the recruitment decision taken may be kept.
- 7. Our relationship with our umbrella organisation.** We accept that our umbrella organisation has a responsibility to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that we comply with all the requirements made upon us in the DBS Code of Practice, this and other policy statements, and in other DBS procedures and processes. We undertake to keep our umbrella body informed of any changes in our organisation, personnel or practices which could materially affect our ability to work within these expectations.