DIVINE UK - SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Introduction

Divine-UK is committed to safeguarding all children and adults. For Divine this commitment directly relates to the fact that we are all made in the image of God and the Church's common belief in the preciousness, dignity and uniqueness of every human life.

The Divine Retreat Centre is committed to creating and maintaining a safeguarding culture for all those within our community and for people who come into contact with us through our work and mission. This policy provides a framework for ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and adults. Consistently applying the procedures laid out in this Policy will help embed fair and safe recruitment practice across Divine UK. This policy will be applied to all applicants, current staff and volunteers at Divine UK regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Policy Purpose

This policy forms part of a suite of safeguarding policies aimed at creating a safer Catholic Church. This policy should be read in conjunction with the RLG's policies on Safeguarding, Low Level Concerns, Data Protection and Code of Conduct. Divine is committed to creating an open and transparent culture in which all members, employees and volunteers are appropriately recruited and suitably trained to identify and report low level and safeguarding concerns.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all those working within or on behalf of the Divine Retreat Centre regardless of their role or the activities they undertake.

Safer Recruitment Guidance and Procedures

A planned approach is imperative when recruiting for a role and should be consistently applied to all workers. This helps to minimise the risk of appointing someone who is unsuitable and ensures a fair process. This process should be applied for both employees and volunteers.

Role Requirements Review

When establishing a new role it is important to ensure that the job description includes the following:

- establishes and describe the main tasks and responsibilities
- identifies the skills and experience required to fulfil the role
- details the training required to be competent in the role
- identifies the main safeguarding responsibilities linked to the role
- establishes if the role requires a Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Check
- details training, development and career pathways available

Job Advertisements

The advertising of any role must include a statement on how Divine keeps children, young people and adults at risk safe. If the role requires DBS/overseas checks then this must be clearly stated in the advert.

You should ensure the advert also contains:

- job/role title
- location
- length/type of post
- the RLSS statement of commitment to safeguarding
- equality, diversity and inclusion statement
- salary
- hours

The advert must clearly state that the successful applicant will be required to undertake safer recruitment checks, including a criminal records check, if applicable to the post.

It is recommended best practice to advertise both internally and externally (such as via online platforms/RLG website) for all paid and voluntary roles, in order to attract a wide variety of applicants. Where the decision is made not to advertise externally, a clear supporting rationale should be provided setting out why this decision has been taken.

Application Process

All applicants should be provided with an application pack which offers important information about the role and Divine UK

The application pack should include:

- job description/role profile including a clear description of safeguarding requirements
- person specification
- a statement about Divine UK's commitment to safeguarding
- appropriate self-disclosure form and statement of when disclosure will be required
- application form providing employment history, education background and qualifications
- reference pro-forma
- statement about how information provided will be used and/or privacy notice

The person specification should outline the following:

- safeguarding skills, experience, knowledge
- safeguarding values, behaviours, attitudes
- if applicable, motivation for working with vulnerable/at-risk groups
- required qualifications and/or professional status

Checking Application Forms

When reviewing applications received for a role within Divine UK the following guidance should be adhered to:

- there must be a minimum of two people involved in reviewing and shortlisting applications
- a record must be kept evidencing the extent an applicant meets the criteria identified within the person specification and role description
- check that any gaps in employment/volunteering and training are accounted for
- check the application is free of any discrepancies and that the information is consistent

- there must be a minimum of two referees (references should cover a period of five years). Robust references provide a first opportunity to deter and prevent those who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and adults at risk of harm from being recruited to such roles.

- References ought to be requested towards the end of the hiring process, ideally when shortlisting and prior to a formal job offer being made.

- One of the references requested must be the applicant's current or most recent employer

- at this stage a completed self-disclosure form is not required

Interview Process

The interviewing panel must determine the format of the interview (presentation, assessment, task, role play, etc.). Applicants must receive an overview of the recruitment process prior to interview.

The interviewers must be well briefed, having been involved in planning the interview and questions and being clear on what to look for in the applicant's responses. Questions will be relevant to the role and give the applicant an opportunity to demonstrate attitudes to and understanding of safeguarding. The topics covered in the interview must be consistently covered with all applicants and a record of the interview must be completed and retained.

Pre-appointment checks and references

Where applicable the following checks must be completed prior to the commencement of any role (paid or unpaid) within Divine UK These checks must be carried out prior to the commencement of the role. This must be clearly explained to the applicant.

- identity, including date of birth

- eligibility to work in the UK

- criminal record checks and barred list checks (DBS)

- qualifications

- professional status

- if the applicant was born overseas or has resided for more than three months or more in a different country over the past five years, then an overseas police check should be completed

- where necessary, a credible translation service should be used to interview rather than an open access platform e.g. Google Translate

All checks completed should be confirmed in writing, verified and documented. This information should be stored within the applicant's personnel file. If there are concerns following the checks they should be followed up on and further information requested, if required.

Should the DBS checks highlight a criminal history then consideration must be given as to whether this is applicable to the job role. This must be reported to the RLG Safeguarding Lead who should contact RLSS, so any identified risk can be appropriately assessed and RLSS can offer professional advice to inform any recruitment decision.

Staff members should never "vouch" for an applicant. A minimum of two references must be obtained of which one should be the applicant's current employer. The applicant must not be able to obtain their own reference. Professional email addresses for references must be used, and all discrepancies must be followed up and recorded.

Induction

All employees and volunteers at Divine should receive an induction as soon as possible on commencement of their role. The induction should be completed by their line manager or appropriate senior member of the team.

The induction process should include the new employee/volunteer receiving an induction pack and/or standalone copies of the following policies:

- Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, Anti-Bullying, Safer Recruitment, Code of Conduct and any other policy, as appropriate to the employee's role
- information on how to contact the Safeguarding Lead and the role of the RLSS
- information about relevant safeguarding training, supervision and appraisals required for the role

Probationary Period

All new volunteers/employees will be provided with a probationary period of six months. The probationary period is an opportunity to integrate new volunteers/employees into their new role. It also provides the opportunity for new volunteers/employees to understand what is expected of them and provides an ongoing assessment of suitability against the criteria listed in the person specification for the role.

Reporting Concerns

Any concerns identified about an employee or volunteer should be reported to their line manager and/or RLG Safeguarding Lead as deemed appropriate. Human Resources (HR) policies and advice should be followed in relation to performance

concerns. For ‘low level’ concerns or safeguarding concerns RLSS should be contacted for advice and guidance.

Data Protection

Divine Retreat Centre has a responsibility to ensure that the safer recruitment process and all personal data collected, stored and disposed of is compliant with UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. The applicant should receive a privacy notice at the point of application. The privacy notice must include what data is being processed and the reason for this. This includes the lawful basis for processing data, who it will be shared with, the retention period and the person’s rights in relation to their data. Should the applicant’s information be retained upon appointment then this will need to be included in the privacy notice supplied in the application pack, or the new volunteer/employee is supplied a new privacy notice on commencement of their role.

This guidance does not intend to provide a comprehensive overview of good data protection practices. Divine’s internal Data Protection Policy must be followed alongside this policy and guidance.

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the RLG every year. Through this process of regular review we aim to improve our services and ensure that any learnings/developments are implemented, within our RLG.

Date of Document Implementation:	**01 April 2026**
Date Review Due:	**01 July 2027**

Appendix

Overseas checks:

Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK

DBS checks:

Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK

Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS):

Advice | Acas

National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO)

Nacro | We See Your Future, Whatever The Past

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Information Commissioner's Office

Data Protection

UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018

Application Form Checklist

How to use the checklist

- Review the application form against the checklist
    - Are there any gaps?
    - Are there any areas you could add to the organisational application form to enhance it?
- Share updated application form with hiring managers and ensure they fully understand why changes have been made
- Reflect on changes made
    - What worked well and provided useful information to support gathering references?
    - Can any further improvements be made?
- Review the application form on a regular basis against current best practice

Activity	Currently in place Yes/No	Recommended Action
RECRUITMENT		
The application form should ask people to demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the job. Only information that is relevant for the job should be requested on the application form. This should focus on: ● information about the applicant – name, contact details, current employment status ● skills and knowledge – qualifications and education, skills relevant to the role		

• experience – previous work experience and explanations of gaps • values – personal qualities, attributes, values and behaviours relevant to the role.		
Application forms should be used to obtain: Full identifying details of the applicant. A statement of relevant academic or vocational qualifications (e.g., Care Certificate) and date of award. A full employment history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training, and part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start and end dates, and explanations for periods not in employment or education/training. Reasons for leaving previous employment and to warrant that they were not under investigation for or subject to any disciplinary sanctions in relation to their conduct at the time of their dismissal (and if they were to provide detail). Details of current or former registration with any relevant regulatory body, declaration of any finding by a regulatory body and any conditions that apply to current registration. A declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers. Disciplinary offences relating to adults at risk and/children (including any conduct related to safeguarding concerns which the penalty is ‘time expired’), and whether the applicant has been the subject of any safeguarding related investigations or concerns, and if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure including referrals to DBS, other professional bodies or the police a statement of the personal qualities and experience the person believes are relevant to		

their suitability for the post and how they meet the person specification. Details of at least two referees – at least one referee should be a professional, the applicant's current or most recent employer.		
The application form should match the level of the role. Use the job description and person specification to work out what information is required on the application form.		
The application form should make it clear that professional references will not be accepted from relatives or work colleagues who are not authorised to provide professional references in an official capacity on behalf of the organisation, or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.		
The application form should include a statement of the personal qualities, values and behaviours and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.		
● The application form should state that: ● The organisation will seek references on successful applicants, and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications and that they are responsible for providing accurate contact details so that referees can be contacted? ● If the applicant is currently working with adults at risk and/children, their current employer will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to adults at risk and/children (including any conduct related to safeguarding concerns which the penalty is 'time expired'), and whether the applicant has been the subject of any safeguarding related investigations or concerns, and if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure including any		

referrals to DBS, other professional bodies or the police		
Applicants must provide a signed statement stating that they are not on the list of those barred from working with adults at risk and/children; or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body (if relevant to the role applied for) They should also warrant that they were not under investigation for or subject to any disciplinary sanctions in relation to their conduct at the time of their dismissal (and if they were to provide detail)		
Application forms should be scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment.		
Note any reasons for obvious gaps in employment, a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression or a mid-career move from a permanent post to temporary work so that they can be explored and verified during the interview.		
Application forms should not ask questions about protected characteristics as these are not relevant to meeting requirements of the job and can lead to discrimination. ● Avoid asking questions on an application form about any of the following: ○ age, race, gender, religion, belief, sexual orientation, disability ○ marital status ○ children and childcare arrangements ○ health record People with disabilities should be offered the opportunity of any reasonable adjustments to the		

application process to enable them to apply for the role.		