

05

Recruitment & Appointment Process



TAKINGCARE

www.presbyterianireland.org/takingcare

5. RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS

::5.1 THE RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS

It is necessary to have a recruitment and appointment policy in place to select leaders in order to provide a safe environment for children and young people. A proper appointment procedure is one of the most sensible and effective ways of assessing a person's suitability to work with children and young people, and may in itself act as a deterrent to potential abusers. This is often felt to be an unnecessary burden, particularly if the person is part-time, a volunteer or already known to the minister or members of the congregation. However, the more routine the procedure becomes, the less intimidating it will be to all concerned. By having good standards of practice in our organisations, people are more likely to want to join. Increasingly parents want evidence of good recruitment.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that anyone who may be unsuitable for working with young people is not given the opportunity to become a leader.



It is important to ensure that everyone participates in a selection procedure, even if they are recognised as people of good standing.

The Appointment of Leaders Process

Application Form: An application form must be completed by everyone applying to work with children and young people in regulated positions. The application form includes the vetting process according to legislation and good practice. Applicants will be asked to declare any past criminal convictions.



Interview: The organisational leader, along with either the minister, Designated Person or an elder, should meet the person and ensure that they have the ability and commitment required for the role. At the interview the child protection policy should be provided and explained and the leader should be given a copy of the pocket-sized leader's guide, 'We Care 4 U Too!'

Referees: The names of two referees should be given by the applicant. The referees should **NOT** be family members, the minister, Designated Person or either of the interviewers. If the applicant is coming from a previous place of worship then a reference should be sought from their previous minister. Otherwise, references should be from people who have had first-hand knowledge of their work with children/young people and have known the applicant for at least two years. It is usually the role of the Designated Person to send a reference request form (see Section 12) to the referees given. These do not need to be sent to the Taking Care Office with the application form but should be kept for the congregation's own records.

Kirk Session approval: All application forms must be signed by either the minister or a member of Kirk Session to say that as far as the elders are aware, the applicant is suitable for the role for which they are applying.

Form to be sent to Taking Care Office: All application forms must be sent to the Taking Care Office. It is at this stage that appropriate vetting will take place in line with current legislation and practice. The Designated Person, whose role it is to distribute forms and collect them before returning them to the Taking Care Office, must check the forms carefully to make sure they have been completed thoroughly.

Letter of appointment to Designated Person: Once the vetting process is complete, a letter will be sent from the Taking Care Office to the Designated Person of the congregation to notify them of the outcome. The applicant can now be appointed. In Northern Ireland the applicant will also receive a certificate directly from Access NI.

::5.2 VETTING

General vetting principles

In order to comply with the law and good practice, all leaders taking up a regulated position to work with children and young people must be vetted. The process of vetting leaders involves a criminal records check which will show if an applicant has any criminal convictions.

The vetting process does take time and because of this, congregations are urged to recruit their leaders well in advance and allow for this time when planning events such as a Holiday Bible Club. Contact the Taking Care Office to find out how long the process is currently taking.

Please remember that vetting is only a part of the appointment process. Just because a person does not have a criminal record, does not mean that they are suitable to work with children. It simply means they have no criminal record.

A person who does have a criminal conviction will not necessarily be barred from working with children and young people within a church setting. Only convictions considered relevant will be taken into consideration when an appointment is made.

Please be assured that all certificates, forms and conviction information are treated sensitively and confidentially at the Taking Care Office.

Northern Ireland

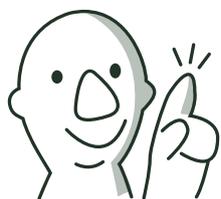
New leaders (since April 2005) who are working in a regulated position with children and young people should complete the most recent application form for leaders which includes an Access Northern Ireland form.

Leaders on a rota basis for organisations such as crèche or children's church for example, should only complete the application form if they meet the frequency test, ie four or more times a year. The leader in charge of each organisation eg Sunday School Superintendent, should also be vetted.

Republic of Ireland

New leaders (since September 2006) who are working in a regulated position with children and young people should complete an application form for leaders which includes a Garda vetting form.

Leaders on a rota basis for organisations such as crèche or children's church for example, should only complete the application form if they meet the frequency test, ie four or more times a year. The leader in charge of each organisation eg Sunday School Superintendent, should also be vetted.



Please check the Taking Care website or contact the office for the most up to date information.

Regulated Position

At the time of writing a regulated position is defined as:

An adult (ie a person 18 years old and over) working either as a volunteer or in a paid position, four or more times a year, in direct contact with children (ie a person under 18 years old).

::5.3 TRAINING

The importance of training

As well as being appointed properly, it is important that leaders have adequate training to do the job required of them. It is the responsibility of Kirk Session not only to appoint leaders but to support them in their role; this includes providing appropriate opportunities for training.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland offers a variety of training resources through both the Boards of Christian Training and Youth and Children's Ministry as well as the Taking Care programme. The Board of Christian Training is responsible for the development of training courses and resources for church members. The Board of Youth and Children's ministry provides training in a variety of formats that equips youth and children's workers for leadership within the local church. Other Boards offer specific training, for example the Board of Mission Overseas offers training for those who are going on a short-term team overseas with their congregation. Child protection training is essential to all people who work with children and young people in all fields of life, within a professional and voluntary basis. Within the Presbyterian Church, the child protection training delivered at a congregational level is called 'Taking Care' training.



It is essential that leaders and helpers within the Presbyterian Church attend Taking Care training facilitated by a Taking Care trainer as this training is specific to the Church's own policy.

Trainers are kept up to date continually with changes to policy, law and practice as well as resources available and upcoming events.

Taking Care training

Leaders and helpers who work with children and young people should attend Taking Care training on a regular basis (as church policy or legislation demands). This includes young leaders/helpers (for definition, see Section 1.3), as well as leaders on a rota basis for organisations such as crèche and children's church. Even though they may not be working with children regularly, they should still attend training. Even those who have a good knowledge of child protection issues in another field should attend as Taking Care training is the only training available that is specific to the policy of the Presbyterian Church.

Taking Care training is available in two different levels – foundation and refresher training. Foundation training is for first time leaders who have not attended Taking Care training. Refresher training is for leaders who have attended foundation training and therefore have a working knowledge of the Church's policy.

It is recommended that the congregation keep a record of all training that has been undertaken and who has attended. The Designated Person should organise training for the leaders in their congregation by contacting the Taking Care Office. To find out where training is happening in your area check the website.

Training for Designated Persons

Once a new Designated Person has been appointed they should attend a training session specifically for Designated Persons. Please contact the Taking Care Office to find out about this training.

Training for employed youth/children's workers

Once appointed, an employed youth/children's worker should also attend Taking Care training for youth/children's workers at the first available opportunity. This training looks in depth at issues which arise when working closely with children and young people.

Training for ministers

Child protection training for ministers as agreed by the 2007 General Assembly is organised through the Taking Care Office on a regular basis (as church policy or legislation demands). Ministers and Presbytery Clerks will be contacted directly about these events.

::5.4 REGISTER OF ALL LEADERS

A register of all leaders working with children within a congregation should be kept and reviewed on an annual basis. This register should be a record of all leaders and helpers in all organisations under the auspices of Kirk Session, whether they have completed an application form or not, are on a rota basis, or are under the age of 18. A register of all leaders is available in Section 12, as well as an annual update form which should be used to update the register.

::5.5 COMMON PROTOCOL

The Common Protocol is an agreed procedure for churches relating to independent organisations working with children and young people, regularly using church premises. The Protocol has been agreed by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Church of Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland and Boys' Brigade (NI), Girls' Brigade (NI), the Scouting Association and Girl Guiding Ulster. It also has application with any other Christian, sporting, arts or leisure groups using church premises. The protocol can be found in Section 12 or downloaded from the website where an information leaflet is also available.

General principles are set out below:

What does it do?

The Common Protocol clearly sets out the expectations and responsibilities of both the churches and the independent organisations, particularly in the areas of child protection, appointment of leaders, information sharing, and reporting of concerns of a child protection nature which may arise within an organisation.

Who should use it?

- :: Congregations whose premises are used by independent organisations (ie not under the auspices of Kirk Session).
- :: All independent organisations working with children and young people, and regularly using church premises.

What is an independent organisation?

The nature of the independence of children's and youth organisations varies. In Northern Ireland, Boys' Brigade (NI) and Girls' Brigade (NI) are integral to the congregations where they exist; the Scouting Association and Girl Guiding Ulster are national young people's organisations and are fully independent. Sporting, arts or leisure groups may be affiliated to national networks or may be smaller stand-alone organisations. The Common Protocol has application for churches and organisations in all of these settings.

What the church is responsible for:

1. Recruiting, selecting and appointing (including vetting) all church based children's/youth leaders **including leaders for BB (NI) and GB (NI).**⁵
2. Providing child protection training to all church based children's and youth leaders **and leaders for BB (NI) and GB (NI).**

⁵BB (NI) and GB (NI) are organisations operated by the local church but also have separate external headquarters. Leaders are nominated, approved and appointed by the local church hence for these organisations points 3 and 4 above do not apply.

3. Supplying to the leader of the fully independent organisation the names and contact details of the church personnel who are responsible for the premises and the Designated Person for child protection in the congregation.
4. Ensuring that the Clerk of Session signs annually, on behalf of the church, the Common Protocol with each fully independent organisation using church premises.
5. Ensuring the safety of the premises.

BB(NI) and GB(NI) companies should satisfy themselves of the extent of insurance cover provided for their activities within their organisation's annual capitation.

What a fully independent organisation is responsible for:

1. Recruiting, selecting and appointing (including vetting) leaders/ workers in their organisations.
2. Providing child protection training to the leaders/workers of their organisation.
3. Providing annually to the congregation the names and contact details of all leaders following appointment and confirming that all new appointees have been subject to vetting.
4. Reporting to the statutory agencies any concerns of a child protection nature that have arisen within the independent organisation.
5. Provide written confirmation to the church that adequate insurance cover is in place for its activities.
6. Ensuring that the leader in charge signs annually on behalf of the organisation, the Common Protocol with the congregation providing premises for the organisation's meetings.

::5.6 EMPLOYMENT OF PAID WORKERS

When a congregation is employing someone to work with children, young people or adults they must follow the appointment process as usual (5.1). As well as this, they must follow the guidance set out in the Peninsula manual, in the section, "Guide to Recruiting Local Church Employees". This manual has been issued to all congregations on behalf of the Presbyterian Church by Peninsula Business Services Limited who provide an employment advice service. Congregations should also have regard to the guidance included in "A Guide to Health and Safety for your Local Church" also issued by Peninsula. Contact details for Peninsula can be found in Section 12 and are included in both manuals.

Other issues that need to be considered are set out below:

Probationary Period

For paid posts, appointment should be conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period which is usually six months.

Annual Appraisal

In line with Union Commission guidelines, the employee should have an annual appraisal of the post using a structured scheme that allows both the employee and employer to review progress in different areas of the job. An appraisal form should be completed by both the employee and the employer.

Salary

In line with Union Commission guidelines, consideration should be given to awarding an annual salary increment each year. If after the appraisal process is complete, it is agreed that the employee has reached the objective and measurable outcomes set the previous year. Any series of incremental rises should only be up to the maximum point on the salary scale set within the contract of employment.

Child Protection Training

Once appointed the employee should be given a copy of the congregation's child protection policy and attend Taking Care training if they have not already done so within the last year. If the role will involve substantial work with children and/or young people, the employee should also attend Taking Care training for youth/children's workers at the first available opportunity.

