

Recruiting Volunteers in the parishes - an outline guide

Note 1 - All underlined forms, role descriptions, letters, etc are available from Hinsley Hall (and the website).

Note 2 - This guide is exactly what it says - a guide. Local arrangements may vary slightly.

1. First steps - see the commentary opposite

1. A volunteer tells the Parish Priest (PP) or rep that they would like to help with an activity.
2. The PP or rep gives the volunteer a role description for that activity - so they can see what is involved; a Confidential Declaration Form (CDF) and a Data Protection Declaration (DPD) to send to Hinsley Hall; and copies of the COPCA Policy on Data Storage, etc and on The Recruitment of Ex-offenders.
3. The volunteer fills in the CDF and sends it to Hinsley Hall, and shows the role description to two referees, asking for their support. Referees must not include the parish priest, the rep, family of the volunteer, or members of the same group/activity.
4. Hinsley Hall checks the CDF and tells the parish rep that all is ok, and to go ahead with further stages of the recruitment.
(If all is not ok, they tell only the volunteer, who can then withdraw without more ado.)

2. The application

(In some parishes SVP themselves may complete parts 2 and 3 of this process - please discuss this with them.)

5. The rep gives the volunteer an Application form (which has space for referees' names).
6. The volunteer fills in the forms and returns them to the rep.
7. The rep writes to the referees and asks them to give the volunteer a reference, using a Reference Request form and covering letter, and enclosing the role description.
8. When the referees reply, the rep arranges an interview with the volunteer.

3. The interview

9. Two of these three - rep, parish priest, activity leader - interview the volunteer.
10. The interview includes a discussion on the Diocesan Safeguarding policy.

4. After the interview

11. The rep helps the volunteer complete a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure application form.
(available only from Hinsley Hall)
12. The rep sends the CRB form to Hinsley Hall, complete with the ID Verification Form and photocopies - and, if needed, the Documentary Evidence Sheet and the Address Continuation Sheet.
13. Hinsley Hall checks and countersigns the CRB form and sends it to the CRB in Liverpool.
14. Liverpool sends copies of the Disclosure Certificate to the volunteer and to Hinsley Hall.
15. Hinsley Hall tells the rep that the Disclosure Certificate has been received and shreds the photocopies - the Disclosure Certificate is shredded after six months.
16. The rep sends two copies of a letter of appointment to the volunteer; the volunteer signs both and returns one to the rep or parish priest - the process is complete.

Recruiting Volunteers in the parishes - an outline guide

Note 1 - All underlined forms, role descriptions, letters, etc are available from Hinsley Hall (and the website).

Note 2 - This guide is exactly what it says - a guide. Local arrangements may vary slightly.

1. First steps

The volunteer *should* send the CDF to us at Hinsley Hall, and not pass it to the rep - but volunteers often insist on giving it to the rep to post. That's fine. When we receive the CDF we add the volunteer to our database and tell the rep about them.

2. The application

The letter to the referees should always include a role description - how else are the referees to know for what they are supporting the volunteers? COPCA says that all volunteers, including long-standing existing volunteers, should be referenced.

Referees must not include the parish rep, the parish priest, family - and beware circular references, where A references B, B references C, and C references A.

Completed application forms and references should be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the parish office accessible only to the parish rep.

3. The interview

The interview should be **informal** and **brief**, and its main purposes are:

- to check the identify of the volunteer
- to check their understanding of and agreement to the role description
- to check their understanding of and agreement to the Diocesan Safeguarding procedures.

This last point is critical. The new manual includes short sections aimed at particular activities, and volunteers could be asked to read theirs in advance, or discuss it at the interview. Even better is for a group of volunteers to discuss them together. Ensuring that the volunteers know what is expected of them, and how to deal with their 'clients', matters much more than just reading a page or two of notes.

4. After the interview

About 10% of the CRB Disclosure Application forms reaching the office at Hinsley Hall have to be sent back for correction - a further 25% have to be corrected in the office. The main points to watch for are listed on a separate page.

When a Disclosure form is all in order our Co-ordinator Fr John Kelly signs it and we send it to the CRB. Most applications are completed in less than a month. The CRB sends copies of the Disclosure certificate to the volunteer and to us, and we tell the rep that our copy has arrived. We then shred the ID photocopies immediately, but COPCA insist that we keep the certificate for six months before shredding it.

The parish rep should then send the volunteer a formal letter of appointment. The letter should make the appointment provisional for some months; it should also make clear to whom the volunteer is responsible and where they can turn for advice and support.