



## Selecting Leaders and Helpers

C/2.1.2

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### Purpose

This document provides guidance for church council members/delegates to undertake screening of all applicants who wish to volunteer within the church, including roles volunteering with children and vulnerable adults.

Before any person can work or volunteer, screening processes should occur, prior to appointment by the church council. This includes:

- Written application and declaration
- Interview/conversation
- Referee checks with two referees
- Linked blue card or exemption card (if working or volunteering with children)
- Appointment to the role by the church council

Each part of the application process is to be completed with prayerful consideration of the gifts and graces of the applicant, their suitability to volunteer in the role, and the needs of the church. For roles requiring a blue card, the appointment of a successful applicant is subject to the receipt of a positive notice from Blue Card Services.

### Scope

This procedure applies to people, including persons under the age of 18 (junior volunteers) wishing to volunteer in a congregational setting within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (the Church). This procedure applies to all volunteer roles, including roles working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

### Inclusion and diversity

The application process has been designed to assist the church council to manage the risks associated with recruiting new volunteers for roles within the church. It is important to ensure that the application process itself, does not become a barrier and does not exclude potential volunteers from volunteering. Suggestions to provide an inclusive process for recruitment is included below.

### Privacy and confidentiality

#### 1. Protecting privacy

It is important to ensure that the application process is completed in an open and honest manner. Therefore, it is essential that confidentiality and privacy are observed throughout the recruitment process. This includes the applicant, referees and members of the councils of the church and their delegates.

Confidentiality is observed when statements (written and oral) are made on the clear understanding that they will be shared only with those who have a legitimate reason to hold that knowledge in order to progress the application or where there is a legal obligation to share the information. Where applicants choose not to provide any of the information requested, it is important to let them know that the church may be unable to



send information, fully process applications or properly consider the person for a volunteer role. Any information collected about applicants in the future will be used and disclosed in the same manner as described. Applicants may request access to personal information about them that is held by the Church. Refer to the [Privacy Policy](#).

## Procedure

### 2. Steps for the applicant

#### 2.1. Written application or expression of interest

- 2.1.1. Complete the [C/2.1.2.15 Application Form \(Volunteer\)](#). An [application form for junior helpers and leaders \(C/2.1.2.13\)](#) is available for use by persons under 18 years wishing to volunteer within the church.
- 2.1.2. Attach any required or relevant documents e.g. past training completed.
- 2.1.3. Email or hand the application form to the Safe Ministry with Children (SMC) Coordinator or the church council chair or their delegate.

#### 2.2. Verbal application or expression of interest

- 2.2.1. For some persons with English as their second language, persons from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, and junior applicants a verbal expression of interest may be more appropriate.
- 2.2.2. All junior applicants should have a parent, guardian or carer present during any discussions, and parental consent must be obtained prior to proceeding with any interview or discussion.
- 2.2.3. Any applicant may request to have a support person, or cultural or linguistic representative present for the application process. The application discussion or interview should not proceed without this support person present.
- 2.2.4. A verbal application or expression of interest is to be treated as a valid application to become a volunteer. An outcome in relation to the verbal application must be provided to the applicant.

### 3. Steps for the church council representative/delegate

#### 3.1. Assess the application

- 3.1.1. Receive the application, consider if other information is required from the applicant to clarify information provided on the application
- 3.1.2. If receiving a verbal application, obtain permission to take notes during the discussion. Use [C/2.1.2.15 Application Form \(Volunteer\)](#) as a guide to ask questions and facilitate the discussion to obtain the relevant information.
- 3.1.3. For junior applicants ensure that the parent, guardian or carer has given consent, and is available to participate in the interview process.
- 3.1.4. An outcome in relation to the application must be provided to the applicant.

#### 3.2. Interview the applicant

- 3.2.1. A [template](#) to use for conducting an interview with a potential volunteer has been developed as a guide. Advise the applicant that you will be taking notes throughout the discussion.



- 3.2.2. For some persons with English as their second language, and persons from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, a translator service or person may be required to ensure a shared understanding of the discussion. Ensure that the person able to translate is suitable and available. If using a translator service, ensure that the service is available, as an appointment may be required.
- 3.2.3. All junior applicants should have a parent, guardian or carer present during any discussions, and parental consent must be obtained prior to proceeding with any interview or discussion.
- 3.2.4. Any applicant may request to have a support person, or cultural or linguistic representative present for the application process. The application discussion or interview should not proceed without this support person present in this circumstance.
- 3.2.5. Consider the appropriateness of gender and culture when planning an interview and ensure that any cultural considerations are observed e.g. a female applicant may not feel comfortable being interviewed by a male, and if so, the interview should proceed at a minimum with a female person present as a support, or alternately a female should conduct the interview process.

### **3.3. Speak with referees**

- 3.3.1. A [template](#) to use for conducting an interview with a referee has been developed as a guide. Follow the prompts in this guide when speaking with each referee. There is space in this document to write notes regarding your discussion with each referee.
- 3.3.2. For some persons with English as their second language, and persons from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, a translator service or person may be required to ensure a shared understanding of the discussion. Ensure that the person able to translate is suitable and available. If using a translator service, ensure that the service is available, as an appointment may be required.

### **3.4. Additional steps for roles working or volunteering with children**

- 3.4.1. Check the validity of existing blue cards or exemption cards by entering details on [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au) and record blue card details in the Register of Volunteers.
- 3.4.2. Determine if the applicant is suitable to work with children and able to complete the tasks required. List any supportive measures to be put in place.

### **3.5. Determine the outcome of the application and interview process**

- 3.5.1. Confirm your determination with the church council members who will formally include the approval or otherwise of the appointment in church council meeting minutes. If an applicant is deemed unsuitable for the role, this should be communicated in a sensitive way (with pastoral follow-up) and other more suitable roles suggested.
- 3.5.2. Advise the applicant of the decision.
- 3.5.3. If the role requires a blue card ask the volunteer to complete the appropriate blue card application form or linking form and lodge it with Blue Card Services, listing the church council chairperson as the organisational contact person. Ensure the details of the blue card or exemption card are listed in the register of workers as required by law. For more information, refer to [C/2.1.2.11 Guidance Notes: Blue card requirements for lay workers](#).
- 3.5.4. Arrange for the applicant to receive relevant Safe Ministry with Children training, and to sign the [Statement of Personal Commitment \(C/2.1.2.7\)](#).



- 3.5.5. Give the original application and attachments to the church council secretary marked 'CONFIDENTIAL' for document storage.

### **3.6. Letter of appointment**

- 3.6.1. Provide the applicant/new volunteer with a letter of appointment. A [sample letter](#) is available as a guide.

## **4. Steps for the new volunteer**

### **4.1. Training**

- 4.1.1. All new volunteers including junior volunteers must complete Module 1 of the Safe Ministry with Children (SMC) Training. This should occur prior to commencing in the volunteer role.
- 4.1.2. All new volunteers (over the age of 18) undertaking roles working with children must complete Module 2 of the SMC Training. This should occur prior to commencing in the volunteer role.
- 4.1.3. All volunteers are required to complete SMC training bi-annually—every two (2) years.

### **4.2. Code of conduct**

- 4.2.1. All new volunteers must complete, read, and sign the [Statement of Personal Commitment \(C/2.1.2.7\)](#). This document details the code of conduct required by all volunteers when undertaking any volunteer role within the church, Synod wide.
- 4.2.2. For new volunteers with English as their second language, reading or comprehension difficulties, or persons from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, it may be more appropriate to read the statement of personal commitment to the new volunteer. The new volunteer may then sign the document to show that they agree with the Statement of Personal Commitment.
- 4.2.3. A Statement of Personal Commitment is required to be signed annually by each volunteer.

### **4.3. Blue card**

- 4.3.1. If the role requires a blue card the volunteer must complete the appropriate blue card application form or linking form, provide a certified copy of their ID and lodge it with Blue Card Services, listing the church council chairperson as the organisational contact person.
- 4.3.2. It is a legal requirement that each volunteer MUST have received a formal positive notice from Blue Card Services prior to commencing volunteering in any role with children. More information about blue card requirements are contained on the [Safe Ministry with Children webpage](#) and [C/2.1.2.11 Guidance Notes: Blue card requirements for lay workers](#).



## Definitions

Term	Meaning
All terms	See Glossary of Terms

## Revisions

Document number		C/2.1.2			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
2.0	09.10.2020	Risk and Compliance Manager	12.10.2020	ED Strategic Resources and Assurance	Safe Church, Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review		12.10.2025			