



## The King's Church Statement on Screening/Vetting policy for safeguarding children

To be read in the light of our full Child Protection Policy – adopted in November 2001; especially the section on the application process.

- Regular volunteers before November 2001 were accepted as safe and proven, well known to the leadership. They do not necessarily therefore have written references or CRB checks - to be crystal clear on this point. All people need to know is that our volunteers are screened and vetted appropriately. There is no legal obligation on us to carry out a "Police" Criminal records check (CRB).
- It should be noted that the issue is whether an applicant will have contact with children, **not** whether they are "lone – working" with children. Thus positions such as driving a mini- bus, giving lifts, being a catering/kitchen helper at a children's club or being a caretaker all need vetting.
- Our policy was adopted before it was possible for us to undertake CRB checks. CRB checks add one more "tool" for us to add to the process of taking the necessary steps to be confident over appointing volunteers with children/youth. The range of checks is outlined in the Child Protection Policy, and includes: References – internal and external; our knowledge of the person and their family: which may be lifelong; whether the applicant is converted and that they accept the spiritual authority of the leadership/Elders, and they are in agreement with our doctrine and values.
- For most new people, certainly for those volunteering for the first time, and who have joined us from elsewhere, we would follow the procedure in the Policy (written references etc – from suitable "external" people such as Employers, previous churches; there not being much point taking *internal* references from members of the church who we can just ask if the person is suitable). For most such new people we would normally also undertake an Enhanced level CRB check. Exceptions exist and might be perhaps a serving teacher/lawyer who has an *unbroken* record and from whom a reference from say their Head teacher/Employer would give enough assurance to the elders/trustees about the "risk."
- When it is considered necessary for a person to be vetted by us with a CRB check, it should be noted that any CRB check they have from some other organisation is *not* sufficient to provide full assurance to us. Reasons include the fact that so called "soft intelligence" may be provided, that the person is unaware of.

- Regarding volunteers who have grown up in the church and who we have known, possibly, all their lives: Reaching 18 is not a “trigger” to suddenly need a CRB check. We could, if warranted, ask for a CRB check for anyone *10 years old* or more. A CRB check is but part of our possible screening process and is to *tell us something we may not already know*: if we suspected them of having a criminal record we would/ could ask for one *before* they attained 18 years old. (I.e. someone does not just suddenly obtain a criminal record and become a threat once they attain 18 years!) Obviously if such a young person has had time away from home and church, we would have to consider if references and a CRB check might be now needed – *because* there is a “gap” where we may not know what they were doing for sure.
- The main threat faced is from perpetrators who are too subtle/sinister to be caught and thus do not have a criminal record. We must realise that having a clear CRB check returned for someone, may only mean that the person has just not yet been caught, and in theory may be a terribly cunning predator on children. Hence the need for the other checks and balances.
- Rechecks of CRB checks: There are various recommendations for the time span between these e.g. 3 years. (NB: All the CRB say is: “Organisations can determine their own rechecking policy.”) None provide an absolute assurance: We may check someone and then after a month they could offend – giving theoretically nearly 3 years before we check them again and find out! One safeguard, hopefully, is to only use committed Christians who are in close, active and ongoing unbroken fellowship with the church. Our policy makes clear that we are looking for people who accept the values and doctrine of the church and who accept the spiritual authority of the leadership.
- The coming ISA – Independent Safeguarding Authority. This will be active from October 2009. It provides a number of improvements. One being that it looks like rechecks may be unnecessary as “updates” will be provided to us on anyone offending or if there is soft intelligence. I suggest we do not do rechecks in the light of this, and await further information. It will be more “dynamic” – more a “video” with updates than a “photo”
- We are walking a tightrope here in all this – and are trying to avoid falling between protection and paranoia, seeking reasonable and workable procedures.

**30<sup>th</sup> April 2008**  
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