

Recruitment of Ex - Offenders Policy for Staff and Voluntary Workers in Holywood Baptist Church.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily debar you from working with Holywood Baptist Church. This will depend on the nature of the position, together with the circumstances and background of your offences.

This Church undertakes not to unfairly discriminate against any person with a criminal conviction or other information disclosed. A request for AccessNI Disclosure will only be made where it is considered relevant to the particular position. Where an AccessNI Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to an appropriate AccessNI Disclosure check.

We undertake to ensure an open and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned e.g. the individual is applying for a driving job but has a criminal history of driving offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.

It is understood that The Exceptions Order (2013) came into force on the 29th May 2013 so that, with limited exceptions, Protected Convictions and Protected Cautions, will not be required to be disclosed in a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate and employers will not be legally entitled to ask questions about such convictions or cautions or to rely on them to refuse work opportunities or employment. Therefore, there is a note on the application form to inform applicants that they are not required to disclose a Protected Conviction or Caution. They are also advised that they can get independent advice from NIACRO about the Access NI application process and convictions on a disclosure certificate.

A **Protected Conviction** is a conviction where:

- 5 years and 6 months has passed since the date of the conviction if the job applicant was under 18 years at the time of the conviction
- 11 years or more have passed since the date of the conviction if the job applicant was 18 years or over at the time of the conviction

- the job applicant was not convicted for an offence listed in Art.2A (5) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 e.g. cruelty to children or the job applicant did not serve a custodial sentence in respect of the conviction
- the job applicant has not been convicted of any other offence at any time.

A **Protected Caution** is a caution where:

- 2 years or more have passed since the date on which the caution was given if the job applicant was under 18 years of age at the time the caution was given
- 6 years or more have passed since the date on which the caution was given, if the job applicant was 18 years or over at the time the caution was given
- the caution was not given for an offence listed in Art.2A (5) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 e.g. cruelty to children.

If it is found that a potential volunteer / employee has previously committed an offence /offences, this church includes in their assessment of the person to undertake particular work the following factors:

- The age of the offender at the time of the offence
- The seriousness of the offence
- The sentence imposed or other manner of disposal
- The time that has passed since commission of the offence
- Whether the individual has subsequently reoffended
- The nature of the work that the individual now wishes to do

This legislation and policy is in accord with the practice of Holywood Baptist Church of following, wherever possible, the Biblical model of forgiveness and acceptance of those who may have offended in the past (see, for example, Matthew 9: 9 – 13 and Luke 15: 11 – 31)