

To all DDOs and ADDOs

February 2021

When we wrote in January, buds were just showing. Now, crocuses, snowdrops and even a few early daffodils are starting to bloom. Despite the extraordinary times we are living through, maybe there is comfort in the fact that the rhythms of creation carry on, consistently and generously showing the true beauty which lies in the heart of the Godhead. This DDO mailing covers a range of different matters and seek to address a number of questions we have been asked recently.

Confirmation/Reception into the Church of England

We remind all (A)DDOs that Canon C4 paragraph 2 states that no person can be admitted to holy orders unless they have been baptised and Episcopally confirmed. Candidates who have previously been confirmed within the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches need to have been received into the Church of England instead of being Episcopally confirmed. (Presbyteral confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church and chrismation within the Orthodox Churches are both forms of episcopal confirmation within the meaning of Canon B28 paragraph 3). Normally, we expect all candidates presenting at a BAP already to be Episcopally confirmed in the Church of England / Received into the Church of England. However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has meant for some that a planned Service of Confirmation has not been able to take place. We understand that this is out of your control. If this is the case, please indicate in the Sponsoring Papers. In such circumstances the Panel Report will note that confirmation/reception has not yet happened and will contain a reminder to address this as soon as COVID-19 circumstances allow.

Canon C4 Faculties

The Archbishop of Canterbury has a sabbatical planned and will be away from 24th April 2021, so won't be available to assess Petitions for a Faculty from then, for the rest of the season. This will impact on Canon C4 Faculties in both Provinces. Please can we urge you to make haste with any Faculties of which you are aware so that your **Diocesan Bishop can Petition in good time before 24th April**. We are working on how to manage any that emerge later than this, but you will save yourself, your candidates and all involved in the process added anxiety if you can complete any C4 Faculty processes as soon as possible.

DDO Consultation

As you may be aware, the next DDO consultation is due to be held in November this year. Amongst other things we were planning to review the first year of the new Shared Discernment Process. However, with the ongoing uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the year-long delay to the new processes, we need to re-think. The Discernment team are at full stretch delivering the Temporary Online Discernment Process, along with developing the New Shared Discernment Process paperwork, systems and protocols. In the Autumn we will be engaging in a major training event as we work to train around 600 new Bishops Advisors. We are also aware of the level of pressure you as DDOs are under. As a result, we are proposing a date for the DDO consultation in Autumn of 2023 as we will have a full season of Stage One and Two discernment panels. We have therefore, provisionally booked **Wednesday the 15th – Friday the 17th of November 2023** at the Hayes, Swanwick. Do put the dates in your calendar. Details about planning and booking will follow nearer the time.

Safeguarding Disclosure Protocol Card

Recently, we have updated the Disclosure Protocol Card which explains to Advisers how to respond if, during an Interview, a candidate makes a safeguarding-related disclosure for the first time. This card has is

also available to you as (A)DDOs, so please find attached to this mailing the updated version of the card, both a colour and a black-and-white version.

Experience of Ministry within the Church of England given Lockdown limitations

We are aware that, during the continuing lockdown, some candidates are having difficulties developing their experience of the breadth of the Church of England which would normally be addressed by placements of visits. One way forward might be for a candidate to ‘attend’ online worship at a couple of other churches of differing traditions and persuasions and use the experience to reflect on the theological and liturgical differences encountered, contrasting them with what they find in their own church context. They might follow this up by having an online conversation with the clergy of those churches, reflecting with them on areas such as: how the church understands its own tradition, its theology of Scripture, its sacramental theology, and its way of doing mission, and how it has expressed itself and its ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Can we assure you that Advisers are equally aware of the limitations and are looking for a candidate’s openness to other church traditions and some understanding, an enquiring mind regarding the Church of England’s breadth, and understanding of what is distinctive about the Church of England, rather than very detailed knowledge of the different traditions - which a face-to-face context might have given them more readily. It might be helpful for you to explain in Sponsoring Papers what your candidate could not do and what they have done instead. Encouraging candidates to reflect upon what they have learned and how this has added value to their understanding of their own tradition, or helping them to reflect sensitively on something that perplexed them about another tradition, but which subsequently became clearer, might help them in Interview.

Overseas safeguarding checks for candidates who have lived abroad

Following on from the IICSA work, we have been encouraged to ensure that you as DDOs are clear about what to do should you have a candidate who has spent a significant time abroad. The current guidelines about this are found in the *Practice Guidelines: Safer Recruitment (2016)*. These say the following:

2.10 Overseas applicants. If a candidate/applicant etc. for a position that is eligible for a DBS check is coming from overseas who, either has never lived in the UK or spent a period of time abroad (i.e. lived abroad), the person making the appointment should request an additional check and ask the applicant to obtain criminality information (also known as a certificate of good conduct/character) from his/her relevant embassy/high commission (or police force). This means that in addition to the DBS check, the candidate/applicant must seek this additional check to cover the time he/she spent abroad. (Further advice can be found on the Home Office website).

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>)

If such information is not available from the embassy/high commission etc. or if there are concerns about the reliability of the information provided, the person(s) making the appointment should take extra care when taking up references and checking any previous employment record’.

The full document is here:

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/safeguarding%20safer_recruitment_practice_guidance_2016.pdf

The *Practice Guidance* is currently being updated, but this is not yet finalised. One helpful addition in the draft updated version will recommend that these checks are needed if the person has lived abroad for ‘**6 months or more within the last 10 years**’. Whilst this has yet to be finalised and so could change, of course, the National Safeguarding Team (NST) have suggested that this is currently a good general guideline to use.

Along with the National Safeguarding Team, we recognise that obtaining a response from some countries can be less than straight-forward. If your candidate struggles to obtain the documentation they need, but can provide you with evidence of their serious attempt to obtain a certificate, that will suffice.

The NST also clarified for us that these overseas safeguarding checks apply equally to those who normally live in the UK, but who have lived abroad for 6 months or more within the last 10 years, and to those who have arrived in the UK more recently seeking employment or training. The Church of England's guidance is consistent with what is asked for in other sectors, such as the charity sector and in social work. The UK government has set a statutory requirement for overseas safeguarding checks for those in health care and education because these involve working with children and vulnerable adults. The same is true, therefore, for those offering themselves for ordained ministry.

Whilst a lot in the *Safer Recruitment: Practice Guidelines* don't apply to those in the discernment process (because our own processes cover what is recommended there), the guidelines regarding overseas safeguarding checks definitely do apply, as the NST have confirmed. These checks always need to work in tandem with the requirement for an enhanced DBS with barring information, since the aim is to ensure a complete picture of a candidate's safeguarding record.

Candidates coming to an Online Panel this season

Whilst several DDOs may well have been doing such checks since 2016, there may be others who have candidates coming to a Panel soon who have lived abroad for 6 months or more in the last 10 years, but who haven't completed these checks. *Please don't panic...* Following discussions with Bishop Mark Tanner, Chair of the Selection Oversight Group, and with the NST, we have agreed that if overseas safeguarding checks are incomplete this will *not* prevent a candidate comes to an online panel up to the end of July 2021, provided the candidate *does* have an acceptable Enhanced DBS with Barring information, as is required for all candidates. Any overseas checks must, however, be completed before a candidate enters training and this will be noted in the panel report where necessary. From the autumn, in the new Shared Discernment Process, these overseas safeguarding checks will need to work in tandem with the Enhanced DBS check with Barring information, which means they will need to be addressed early in the process. We will ensure that there are boxes on the forms to remind you. In the meantime, should you have a candidate coming to a Panel this year who needs an overseas safeguarding check, if you could possibly just mention where you have got to with addressing it in your Sponsoring Papers that would be really helpful.

If you have any further questions relating to this area or need support, Clare Worrell, the Human Resources Business Partner for Safeguarding would be glad to assist. Do email clare.worrell@churchofengland.org. Clare works Monday – Wednesday.

Candidates Panel - Overseas safeguarding checks

It goes without saying that the same processes (as explained in the previous item) apply to those you are sending to the Candidates Panel, where a candidate has lived abroad for 6 months within the last 10 years.

Candidates Panel - Pre-Booking Places on a given Candidates Panel

We are often asked if you can pre-book a Candidates Panel place. Up till now that hasn't been possible. However, we have changed our processes slightly to help you. It is now possible for you to provisionally pre-book a place for a Candidate at a future Candidates Panel. To do so, please send into the Sponsoring Papers email address a completed Candidates Panel Proforma, with the candidate's name and

‘Candidates Panel’ in the subject-line of the email. **Please note that a place at a given Candidates Panel is only confirmed when all required paperwork has been received by the paperwork submission date for a Panel.** If a Panel is over-subscribed, priority will be given to candidates for whom we do have the full and complete paperwork by the submission date. The Candidates Panel Proforma is available for download near the bottom of this webpage: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/diocesan-resources/ministry/supporting-candidates-through-selection>. A guide to Candidates Panel, and information about meeting dates and submission dates for paperwork, are available earlier on that page. We hope that it helps you a little in your planning to be able to pre-book, and this means the initial Candidates Panel processes are a little closer to the BAP / TODP processes.

Mop up BAPs

We have received some enquiries regarding whether we are planning to run any ‘Mop-up’ BAPs after July for any candidates whom dioceses wish to be assessed using the present Criteria and current temporary online process but who will not be ready for assessment in this way before the summer holidays. We can confirm that we are **not** intending to run any further BAPs/Temporary Online Interviews beyond July, and therefore any candidates who will not be ready for assessment by July should be prepared on the basis that they will be assessed using the new Shared Discernment Process and new Qualities for Discernment that will come into operation in the autumn. However, if exceptional or emergency circumstances arise which entail a candidate who had been booked into a Panel before the summer not being able to attend their Panel, we will work with you on a case-by-case basis to resolve the situation.

Training - Introduction to the New Shared Discernment Process

Some requests have come in for a further introductory training day on the new Shared Discernment Process, especially for those who have recently become members of the DDO community, and for one or two others. Trying to find a date with Panels every week is a bit tricky, but we are able to offer one date: **Thursday 25th March – 9.00am – 4.00pm** (with screen breaks and a break for lunch).

This training is intended for those DDOs or ADDOs who were not in post and so did not attend the two-day long training we offered between November 2019 and January 2020. Since we are offering the training over one day instead of two, it will, necessarily, be in less detail than the full training was, but we believe it will give you a good orientation to enable you to work with the new process. It will cover:

- The rationale for the new Shared Discernment Process.
- An introduction to the new Qualities for discernment.
- The shape of the new two-staged process for assessing candidates and an exploration of the content of each stage.
- Using image, metaphor and symbol in the new process.
- A little on working at depth with candidates in the new process on matters relating to personality, character and relationships.

There will be a little reading to do before the day in order for you to get the most from the training. This will be sent nearer the time of the event. To book a place please send your details by email to chris.north@churchofengland.org indicating a) your name b) diocese c) your role.

This will be the last Introduction to the new Shared Discernment Process this academic year. If there are new DDOs / ADDOS appointed after Easter but before the autumn, do be in touch with us, and we will share some recorded training events.

Initial Training for new (A)DDOs

Whilst we can't run any further new DDO Initial training events, we have a recording of previous training that we can share as a resource.

Stage One – Carousel Conversations

Following consultation with you as DDOs, the Selection Oversight Group and the Ministry Council of the Church of England, the House of Bishops have agreed that for the new Shared Discernment Process, **Stage One: Carousel Conversations will be held primarily online.** Candidates will be invited to an opening briefing, to join in worship and have six short Carousel Conversations with advisers online. For candidates, is likely to take around half a day. Candidates have accessed online Panels really well this year so we are confident that this will be possible for the vast majority of candidates. However, we do not want to put a candidate with a disability which means an online panel would be very problematic at a disadvantage. If you are working with any candidates who would find an online panel impossible, please do be in touch with us and we will explore with you what bespoke arrangements we can make.

Psychological Assessment Project

Carys Walsh says a huge thank you to all who came to the meeting on 3 February which introduced the Psychological Assessment Project. The polls towards the end of the meeting, told us that the following will be the main priorities of the working group for the next 3 months:

- Review of the Traffic Lights document (work is already underway on this)
- Drawing up guidelines for a psychological assessment
- Drawing up a person spec for a psychological assessor
- Drawing up guidelines on appointing an assessor

Another priority which was identified was providing advice for any diocese looking to move onto the next stage, whatever that is. This will be ongoing rather than focused just in the first 3 months. We will let (A)DDOs know about further meetings. If anyone has any questions about the project, or would like to get in touch for any reason, please feel free to contact Carys Walsh on carys.walsh@churchofengland.org

The English word 'Lent' is a shortened form of an Old English word meaning 'spring season'. As we begin, this week, to journey with Jesus in his work of salvation and towards Easter, we hope that this season may be a source of reflection, restoration and hope in the Lord who longs to transform each of us, even as we continue to live through the challenges of lockdown. It has been really good to see so many of you at training events in January and February. Thank you for your being such great colleagues to work with and for all you are doing to prepare candidates for panels this year. Do be kind to yourselves. This comes with thoughts and prayers for you and those you care about.

With very best wishes,

Joy Gilliver and the Discernment Team