

Chapter 2: Recruitment and selection of leaders and volunteers (leaders)

Aim of the chapter

To outline recruitment, selection and management procedures that will:

- i. Minimise the opportunity for unsuitable people to work or volunteer with adults who may be at risk
- ii. Give consistency of approach
- iii. Reassure those engaging with our churches that all possible measures are taken to recruit suitable leaders

Role descriptions

The first step is to define the leadership or pastoral role. This involves thinking through what exactly Joymount Kirk Session consider the role to be, identifying what skills will be required and being clear about the qualities required to fill the post.

The qualifications (if any), skills and qualities required of the leader will be described in a specification for a leader.

It is the responsibility of Joymount Kirk Session to draw up its role descriptions for its church if they do not already exist in Presbyterian language.

Examples of relevant roles

Role	Status
Elder	As already defined by PCI (not recruited as per other roles*)
Leader of an adult disability group	Write a role description based on the specific activities of the group
Pastoral Support Team member	Write a role description based on the scope of the pastoral support.

* Please see [**The Code: The constitution and government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland \(2026\)**](#)

The recruitment process

1. There is an application form for all volunteers and leaders of adult ministries for adults at risk.
Information about the organisation must be included, as well as a copy of our Safeguarding Statement. All information received will be dealt with confidentially.
2. There is a declaration form requesting information on previous convictions and cautions that are not exempted by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI)

Order 1978, and any current investigation processes.

The applicant must also be asked to provide any information on any investigation carried out in relation to adult or child abuse in which they have been the alleged perpetrator, and to agree to further enquiries being made, relevant to the declaration.

Kirk Session must make it clear that such information will be dealt with in a confidential manner and not used unfairly to disadvantage the applicant. The declaration form must be returned to the Kirk Session in a sealed envelope marked 'confidential' and only opened when the preferred applicant has been identified. See also Access NI and Criminal Vetting Procedures.

3. There must be an interview process suitable to the role and task. Usually, this will be conducted by at least one member of Session and the Leader in Charge of the relevant organisation.
This is also a good opportunity to understand the individual's understanding of safeguarding.
4. Written references must be sought for all roles and posts.
5. Where a post involves a professional or regulatory qualification as part of its essential requirements a check should be made of the professions' public register. For example, social work/social care roles and NISCC.
6. An appropriate Access NI disclosure check must be carried out. The requirements for this are set out in the:
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
Enhanced checks must be carried out.
7. The post is finally approved by Kirk Session on all occasions.

It is important to note that new people joining Joymount Presbyterian Church must not be admitted to a leadership role immediately.

Staff/volunteers must not begin their role until the Access NI check is completed.

Supporting volunteers and leaders

Supporting our volunteers and leaders (leaders) contributes to safer activities for all. Leaders will feel supported, reducing anxieties and this will lead to an increase in confidence, which will in turn lead to more timely identification of any safeguarding concerns.

Joymount Kirk Session therefore must include:

- **Introduction and induction to the role**
For example, meeting with the individual and discussing information on the church's policies, procedures, guidelines, activities and ethos.

Talk about the expectations of their role and how these fits within the wider work of Joymount Presbyterian Church.

Ensure that they are aware of how to raise an issue and ensure that they have undertaken training on the recognition, recording and reporting of abuse.

Joymount Presbyterian Church should ensure that staff and volunteers receive an induction appropriate to their role and experience.

For contracted roles, i.e. those that are paid under a job description, a six-month probationary period should be included before confirmation in post.

- **Training**

All staff and volunteers (including Adult Safeguarding Champions, Kirk Sessions, staff) must receive adult safeguarding training relevant to their role and the nature of the contact they will have with adults at risk.

This training must be reviewed by the PCI Safeguarding Team and will be updated regularly in line with changing legislation and practice.

It is the policy of Joymount Presbyterian Church that training takes place at least every three years.

It is the responsibility of the Council for Social Witness, and the Safeguarding Lead, to ensure that training is available across the denomination and is kept up to date and relevant.

It is the responsibility of Joymount Kirk Session to ensure that they keep a contemporaneous list of active volunteers/staff and ensure that they are adequately trained.

See also procedures and expectations regarding training.

- **Supervision and support**

Support and supervision are essential to ensure that leaders feel reinforced in the ministry in which they are engaged, and that Joymount Kirk Session is confident that individuals are carrying out their roles to the required standard.

Leaders must be facilitated to discuss their roles at regular intervals.

This will, in turn, assist Joymount Kirk Session to become aware of and deal with any issues that may prevent the work being carried out effectively, or to quickly identify any behaviour or attitude that may be contrary to the teaching of our church.

It is important that at least annually there is a leader meeting and that all volunteers and/or staff associated with an organisation are gathered to review the activity for the past period, and to review how each member of the team is engaging their role. At least one representative of Joymount Kirk Session should be present to oversee this meeting and support that team.

Paid staff (employees) in a church must have a personnel file, and training and supervision records/appraisals are recorded in this.

- **Oversight**

It is central to the role of the Adult Safeguarding Champion (designated safeguarding person) to have oversight of the individual leaders' Access NI checks, attendance at training and an accurate recorded date if they come out of a role.

(See Chapter 5 for more information on this specific role.)

CHAPTER END

