# COVID 19 Safer Recruitment FAQ’s

## **Due to the current health emergency, there are some temporary changes to how we are carrying out some safer recruitment checks:**

**Q1: My DBS has nearly run out – do I need to bother about getting a new one while I am socially distancing?**

A1: That depends on if you plan to carry out any role or part of a role that requires a DBS. If so, you need to renew your DBS check. However, if you are socially isolating, and will not be in a leadership role or having contact with children and vulnerable people through or on behalf of the church during this time, you can wait until things change to do your renewal.

**Q2. How can I get my ID documents checked for the DBS check renewal whilst I am socially distancing?**

A2: If you are well known to your parish safeguarding officer, and they would be able to identify you from your photo ID and address, you can scan in and send your documents to them by email. In your email, please confirm that these documents are true copies of the originals. If you don’t have a scanner, could you photograph the documents on a phone and send them that way? If not, you may need to post them to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

**Q3: I am taking up a new role, and need to do a DBS for the first time. I don’t really know our safeguarding officer, so how can I get my ID checked?**

A3: If your PSO doesn’t know you very well, you could email them and arrange to send them your documents by email, followed by a Skype conversation, in which you use the video link to show them the originals, so that that they can check the photo ID against what you look like. You can download and use Skype for free from here: <https://www.skype.com/en/>. Other similar programmes such as Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) are also available. If you don’t wish to do this, you could post them to your Parish Safeguarding Officer.

**Q4: We want to set up a social support group, to get shopping and prescriptions for elderly and vulnerable people who normally come to our church. Do we need to do safer recruitment, given that it’s an emergency?**

A5: Because we know that scammers and thieves will also want to use this opportunity to have contact with vulnerable people, you MUST do safer recruitment for these roles. By safer recruitment, we mean :

* Decide what roles you will need, and what types of things people will do – some things such as collecting prescriptions and handling money will require a DBS check, but phoning someone they already know through the church and are happy to check up on will not.
* For every person applying for a role, do a simple application form, so you know who they are, how to contact them and what skills and interests they have – they might enjoy shopping, or prefer to support people by phone or email.
* Take up references – one of these can be from someone at church, but one should be from an employer or another place where they volunteer if at all possible. You can take these up by phone or email if that’s easier. If the applicants are people who have already been safely recruited for a role in the church, you may find that these references are already on file, so you don’t need to take them up again.
* Ask your volunteers to complete a confidential declaration, to confirm that they don’t have any cautions or convictions that would make them unsuitable for this sort of role. If they declare anything, contact the safeguarding team so we can consider it – you may not want to send someone with a history of shoplifting to do the shopping for example, but there might be other roles they could help with.
* Decide what roles people will carry out, and if their role requires it, do a DBS check. Some people from your church will already have them for other roles such as Reader, pastoral visitor, or children’s activity assistant, so as long as they are clear and in date, (within 5 years) you don’t need to do a new one. Volunteers should not go into any situation that requires a DBS check until you have the results.
* Ensure the volunteers have the right safeguarding training, so they know what to do if they see or hear something that worries them. If they don’t need a DBS check, they can just do the one hour Basic Awareness, or if they need a DBS, they should also do the 3 hour Foundation. Training can be accessed online for free here: <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

**Q5: What else do we need to consider for helping people in our community?**

A5: You need to consider how you will keep both volunteers and those they are helping safe. Volunteers will need to know what to do if someone is ill; and to reduce the spread of infection by washing their hands between each activity.

* People over 70 should be staying at home – if they are fit and well could they help out on the phone or by email? Perhaps they could phone someone for a chat, or to get a shopping list? Can they afford the phone bill if using their own phone to do this? Can you offer expenses?
* If someone is using their own car for volunteering, such as collecting shopping and prescriptions, you will need to check they have an MOT and insurance that covers them – Insurers are saying they won’t charge extra to add emergency volunteering onto someone’s policy, and the volunteer just needs to phone them. Can you pay mileage expenses? If so, 25p - 45 p per mile is the usual mileage rate for volunteering, and isn’t taxed.
* How will shopping be delivered and money collected? Volunteers should not be going into houses or coming into close contact with those they are visiting. Can it be left on the doorstep? Is the vulnerable person able to carry it in or does there need to be a system agreed for the household members to stay 6 feet away whilst the volunteer brings the shopping in and puts it on the side? How about payment - can an invoice be dropped through the letterbox for them to repay a church fund, from which volunteers will be repaid what they have spent? Or can the person be asked to put the money into a small plastic bag or an envelope to give to the volunteer along with a shopping list? Will volunteers be issued with hand sanitiser and/or gloves so they can accept the money without worrying about contamination? This will need to be agreed in advance with volunteers and those they are helping so no one is at risk of infection.
* Ensure you have a list of who is contacting which vulnerable person, for what and when. If you can, give official visitors a letter on Church headed notepaper, so people can see where they are from and why they are there. Make sure those they are visiting know who to expect, when and for what so that they are not duped by unscrupulous con men saying they are from the church.
* Make sure your volunteers know what to do if they find someone is very ill when they visit. It may not be a corona virus infection, it could be someone has fallen and injured themselves, or has chest pain. Have a list of local doctors surgeries to hand, and ensure the volunteers are all carrying mobile phones, so they can call an ambulance or 111 if needed.

**If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact the Safeguarding Team on 07834 514842, and leave a message – someone will get back to you as soon as possible.**