



Diocese of Nelson

Policy on Police Vetting

Preamble

The Anglican Diocese of Nelson of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia seeks as far as possible to create a safe environment in the church within its jurisdiction for people of all ages who participate in the life of the church and for all those who receive ministry from the church. In particular the Diocese of Nelson seeks to ensure that all relevant factors in the lives of its (potential) ministers and office-bearers are disclosed so that no appointment is made of persons whose ministry practice is likely to be unsafe.

The Diocese of Nelson acknowledges that some behaviours which may draw the attention of the police can be repented of and need not, if the passage of time has demonstrated the repentance to be profound and lasting, affect appointment to ministry. However in the present climate with regard to sexual abuse, the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia recognises that extra care over appointments must be taken, and that some behaviours can never safely be presumed to be a thing of the past.

Policy

The Diocese of Nelson requires people appointed to or formally seeking appointment to the following positions:

- Licensed clergy
- Clergy with permission to officiate
- Persons seeking formal candidacy for 'Discernment for ministry' and/or for "Training for Ordination"
- Licensed Lay Preachers
- Other licensed lay persons (e.g. lay pastoral assistants, lay chaplains)
- Pastoral Assistants
- Parish Nurses
- Parish Administrators/Secretaries
- Parish Counsellors
- Youth Workers
- Children (and Family) Workers
- Leaders of ministries to children, youth, the elderly
- Any other category of minister as decided by Standing Committee from time to time to consent to "police vetting" before letters of appointment, episcopal licenses, contracts of employment are issued and/or agreed to, or other method of appointment or commissioning for ministry is undertaken.

As the Diocese of Nelson is the body registered to request police vetting, all police checks for all categories of ministers and prospective ministers shall be requested by the Diocesan Secretary.

Any appointment will depend on satisfactory response to the vetting.

(Note that “police” means the police or security forces of any and all countries in which persons to whom this policy applies may have resided in at any time in their lives).

Process

1. All applicants for licensed positions or contractual positions within the Diocese and within the Parishes and Mission Units of the Diocese are required to provide a signed “Consent to Disclosure Form” before there is any consideration of their application.
2. The fact that a police check has been requested by the Diocese shall be record by the Diocesan Secretary
3. The results of the police vetting shall be received by the Diocesan Secretary, who shall review the contents of the report and if clear advise the appointing person or body that an appointment process can proceed. In the event that the vetting is not clear, the Diocesan Secretary shall make an assessment of the disclosed information relevant to the position being sought (or currently held, as the case may be). Should such assessment be “satisfactory” advise the appointing person or body that the application [subject to any caveats thought necessary] may proceed to further consideration. Should such assessment be “unsatisfactory” communicate this to the relevant person in charge of the appointing process. The Diocesan Secretary shall also keep a record of his/her advice for future reference.

N.B. It is a condition of the Police Vetting system that –

“Details of police vetting are not disclosed to any staff, other than the individual tasked with handling this information and the subject of the vet.”

4. In the case of episcopally licensed positions for people who have continuously resided in the Diocese of Nelson during the period since their last police vet it shall be at the discretion of the Bishop whether a police vet is actually carried out PROVIDED that no more than five (5) years have elapsed since the previous police vet (noting that in each situation an applicant must nevertheless sign a Consent to Disclosure form).
5. In the case of contractual positions and/or local appointment (i.e. for positions decided upon by vicar/priest-in-charge, vestry, with or without consultation with the Diocesan Secretary) the following policy will apply:
 - a. Formal applications, without exception, shall be accompanied by signed Consent to Disclosure forms for police vetting to be carried out.
 - b. All formal applications with signed consent forms shall only proceed if either a satisfactory police check is carried out or the Diocesan Secretary confirms that, according to records held in the Diocesan Office, a satisfactory police vetting has been carried out within the last five (5) years.
 - c. Other, less formal processes of application/appointment may not proceed without signed Consent to Disclosure form being provided unless the vicar/priest-in-charge is satisfied by enquiry to the Diocesan Secretary that a satisfactory police vetting has been carried out for the person concerned within the previous five (5) years – it being understood that in the life of a mission district or parish people may change ministry positions every few years; nevertheless:
 - d. Where people being considered under a less formal process of application and appointment have not continuously resided in the mission district or parish for previous

- five (5) years or since their last police vetting or have not had a police vetting sought by the Diocese of Nelson within the previous five (5) years then it shall be mandatory that Consent to Disclosure is sought and a police vetting is carried out.
- e. Any person in charge of any process of appointment to any position of ministry responsibility may for any sufficient reason insist that a current Consent to Disclosure is sought and a police vetting be carried out whether or not there has been a vetting in the previous five (5) years.
6. Where application is being made for the renewal of a position/licence consent (and vetting) need not be sought provided that a satisfactory police vet (sought by the Diocese of Nelson) has been carried out within the previous five (5) years and this has been recorded in the Diocesan records.
 7. Where people making application have not resided in the Diocese of Nelson continuously for the period since their last police vetting it will be mandatory for a check to be made and there will NOT be reliance on the advice of other episcopal units EXCEPT that where residency has been in overseas jurisdictions in which the obtaining of police checks is difficult or impossible, at the discretion of the Bishop, the Diocese may seek some alternative form of information about the character and conduct of the applicant.
 8. All people in positions noted above will be asked to sign a 'Consent to Disclosure' form at least every five (5) years and police vet will be requested at least every five (5) years. It shall be the responsibility of the Diocesan Secretary to ensure that this policy is carried out.
 9. People changing positions [e.g. a lay person seeking acceptance into the 'Discernment for Ministry' process; a licensed clergyperson retiring and seeking a permission to officiate] : Provided the Bishop is satisfied that a satisfactory vetting (sought by the Diocese of Nelson) has been carried out within the previous five (5) years the Bishop may waive the requirement that consent to disclosure and subsequent vetting is mandatory for the taking up of a new category of ministry.
 10. Clergy with permission to officiate (noting that permission to officiate is renewed more frequently than licences) shall submit a signed Consent to Disclosure form before each renewal of the permission but the Bishop need only ask the Diocesan Secretary to request a police vetting if this has not been sought by the Diocese of Nelson and carried out within the previous five (5) years, EXCEPT that, at the discretion of the Bishop of Nelson clergy and lay people with permission to officiate in the Diocese of Nelson by virtue of their holding some significant office outside the Diocese AND who are accountable primarily to a body or bishop other than the Diocese of Nelson or the Bishop of Nelson need not be asked for Consent to Disclosure PROVIDED that the Bishop of Nelson has been satisfied by that body or bishop that a recent satisfactory vetting has been carried out.

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