Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all job applicants*, and aims to select people for employment on the basis of their individual skills, abilities, experience, knowledge and, where appropriate, qualifications and training.

PCI will therefore consider ex-offenders for employment on their individual merits, and having a criminal record will not necessarily debar an applicant from working with us. We will endeavour to discuss an applicant's particular circumstances with them prior to considering the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

The approach taken towards employing ex-offenders will differ depending on whether the job is or is not exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order 1978.

Jobs covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order 1978

During the recruitment process we will ask job applicants to disclose any unspent convictions, but will not ask job applicants questions about spent convictions, nor expect them to disclose any spent convictions.

If an applicant has a conviction that is not spent and if the nature of the offence is relevant to the job for which he/she has applied, we will review the individual circumstances of the case and may at our discretion decline to select the individual for employment.

Jobs that are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order 1978/ Regulated positions

If the job into which the PCI is seeking to recruit is one of the excluded jobs listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order 1978 / a regulated position, we will require the applicant to disclose all convictions, whether spent or unspent. Even in these circumstances, however, we will not refuse to employ a particular individual unless the nature of the conviction has some relevance to the job for which the individual has applied.

Furthermore, if the job is exempt, PCI will, once it has selected the person to whom it wishes to offer employment, seek documentary evidence about that person's criminal convictions. We will seek the applicant's agreement to make an Enhanced Disclosure check through Access NI. A copy of the Access NI Code of Practice is available from the Personnel Department on request, or

by using the following link: https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/accessni-code-practice

PCI is committed to ensuring that all information provided about an individual's criminal convictions, including any information released in disclosures, is used fairly and stored and handled appropriately and in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. Data held on file about an individual's criminal convictions will be held only as long as it is required for employment purposes and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised person.

Convictions during the Course of employment

If an employee is cautioned, charged or convicted of a criminal offence whilst employed by PCI, he/she must advise their Line Manager in writing as soon as possible. This information will be regarded as confidential. We will review the individual circumstances of the case and may meet with the employee to discuss this before making any decisions with regard to suitability for continued employment.

Failure to disclose such convictions, cautions or charges could be viewed as gross misconduct and could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

It is a condition of continued employment with PCI that employees comply with a request for an enhanced police check should this be required and relevant to their job role.

(* see Equal Opportunity Policy for full details)

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL 9 MARCH 2010, WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY PASSING TO THE SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL FROM 1 JANUARY 2016.