

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Purpose

Chapter 1 provides accommodation and related support services to help vulnerable people enjoy a more fulfilled life. It is a charity, based on Christian principles, which offers human compassion and practical support to meet people's needs respecting their faith, culture and social background. Currently Chapter 1 works in partnership with 29 local authorities and has a growing network of 40 projects across England: Andover, Darwen Centre, Clevedon, Exeter, Exmouth, Gosport, Guildford, Leamington Spa, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Nuneaton, Restormel, St Austell, St Leonards-on-Sea, Southampton, Tunbridge Wells, Weston-super-Mare and Yeovil.

Chapter 1 is committed to the mission of:

'Changing lives one by one'.

History

Chapter 1 grew out of the Christian Alliance, an interdenominational Christian organisation founded in 1920 as a registered charity, which subsequently changed its name to KeyChange in June 1994. It set up a separately registered and independently functioning Housing Association – Christian Alliance Housing Association Limited – in 1986, which is registered both as a charitable company limited by guarantee and a registered social landlord with the Housing Corporation.

Services

Chapter 1 aims to provide its services to all sections of the community based on their needs. It provides non-judgemental support that allows individuals to make informed choices about themselves and their future lives. It does this by having committed professional and trained staff working to agreed policies and good practice. Chapter 1 prides itself on providing services that are hallmarked by quality, value for money, flexibility and an ability to respond to individuals' circumstances, even at times of severe crisis.

Structure

A voluntary Board with a range of skills and experience oversees Chapter 1's overall strategy and direction of work including ensuring the work is consistent with the Christian ethos of Chapter 1 as set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association (constitution). Chapter 1 is managed on an operational basis in an area structure with five operations directors sharing this responsibility. The corporate management team consists of the Operations Directors plus the Chief Executive, who has overall management responsibility for Chapter 1, a Finance Director and Property and Development Manager.

Chapter 1 has local groups of 'Friends' supporting the work of individual projects. These consist of local volunteers drawn primarily from local churches. They offer practical support and encouragement to the local work.

Revised January 2010

Values Statement

The new strapline, changing lives one by one, reminds us of our mission and vision. Changing lives one by one also captures our values.

Firstly, **'Changing'**. We believe our whole cause is about change. That is our hope for every vulnerable person who comes to us. If we didn't think anyone or anything could change, we wouldn't bother to be in the people business. We certainly wouldn't have lasted 80 years! So we want to make it central to what we are about.

Secondly, **'Changing'** also tells us that we ourselves are changed through our work with the vulnerable; that they have lessons to teach us; and that we receive great joy from the privilege of being alongside people during times of personal crisis and vulnerability.

Thirdly, we care about all **'lives'**. Each life is important. And each matters to the creator of life as many of us personally believe. But regardless of faith, we think that each life deserves the opportunity to be lived to its full potential and so we are committed to ensuring it happens to the best of our individual efforts.

Fourthly, **'one by one'**. We are realists. We know that Rome wasn't built in a day and change takes time, so we are personally committed to supporting the most vulnerable: one person at a time, believing that change happens, sometimes dramatically, sometimes almost unnoticeably.

Finally, **'one by one'** is also about starting at the point where the person is in their lives. Getting alongside and helping them to shape the future for themselves with our professionalism, patience, prayer and perseverance.

So when a stranger asks you what Chapter 1 is all about you can now tell them – changing lives one by one!

Dear Applicant,

Please read through the following notes carefully as we will shortlist candidates for interview based on the information provided on the application form.

The following advice is designed to help you to fill in the form as effectively as possible.

Application pack

The application pack includes a job description, person specification, application form, and information about Chapter 1. Please ensure you read through all of the paperwork carefully **before** you complete your application to give you a thorough understanding of the job role and the organisation.

Person specification

We are committed to a fair and positive selection process. We aim to achieve this by using a 'person specification' for all vacancies. The person specification gives details of the qualities and qualifications that are essential, and those that are not essential but would be useful. You should use this as a guidance to compare how your knowledge, experience and skills align to those we are looking for. If you feel that you have the potential and attitude to develop your skills and experience in areas that we are looking for, or you would like to develop a career in the supported housing sector, this is just as valuable to us.

Your experience

Ask yourself why you are interested in the job? Would it be a promotion or a good sideways career move to broaden your experience? Think about what evidence can you provide to show you have the skills, knowledge and experience set out in the person specification or the motivation and drive to succeed in the role? Consider any experiences you have from outside work, such as community, voluntary or leisure interests which may be relevant to the role you are applying for.

Equality and diversity

We are a diverse and multi-cultural organisation. We therefore expect every member of our staff to have an understanding of equality and diversity in the workplace. As with other requirements, you should consider how your knowledge, experience and skills show this understanding.

Completing the application form

- **Use black ink**

If you are short listed for interview, your application form will be photo-copied several times for the selection panel. It is therefore very important that you complete your application form in **black** ink so that clear copies of your application can be made.

- **Personal Details**

Fill in all the facts first, for example, your name, address including postcode and current employer.

- **Education and Training**

Tell us if you have any of the educational or professional qualifications we are looking for. These will be listed in the person specification.

- **Employment History**

Please give details of your current and previous employers. Also give details of any community or voluntary work you have carried out which you feel is relevant to the role.

- **Experience Skills**

This is where you are given the opportunity to "sell" yourself. Use this section to apply yourself to the role by providing evidence of the skills, knowledge and experience we have asked for in the person specification. Deal with each point clearly and concisely and continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary. Do not repeat what you have written in the Employment History section.

- **References**

We require two professional reference one which must be from your present or last employer, or your last educational establishment. Make sure name of referees, relationship and address are fully completed.

- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986**

Due to the nature of our service and the client group we support, all successful candidates will be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check. Candidates are therefore required to provide details of any 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions. Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily hinder your application and will depend on the background and circumstances of your offence. Any information provided will be completely confidential and will be considered only in relation to the post for which the above exemption order will apply.

Please note failure to disclose any such information which later comes to light through the CRB check will render the withdrawal of any offer of employment.

- **Additional Pages**

Additional pages submitted should be A4 size and paper-clipped to your application form. Make sure you put your name on top of the each page and the section of the application form you are referring to.

- **Declaration**

Please ensure you sign and date your form to signify that all information you have provided is true and correct.

THE INTERVIEW

Do's and Don'ts

Be aware that you will make an impression within the first few seconds of arriving at your interview. Here are a few tips to help make that first impression count!

Do's

- Arrive on time – arriving 10 to 15 minutes early will give you time to relax and focus.
- Dress the part for the job – a scruffy appearance will not do.
- Be prepared – a candidate who can show they have prepared themselves for the interview will make a very good impression.
- Research the organisation (eg the sector, the client group) and think about how you will present yourself at the interview in relation to the role you are applying for.
- Listen carefully to questions – in order that you can provide the appropriate response
- Answer questions truthfully and succinctly providing examples where necessary
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer at the end – will show you have a genuine interest in the organisation and the role you are applying for

Don'ts

- Make negative comments about previous employers
- Waffle and talk at a tangent – back up what you are saying with relevant examples
- Leave your mobile phone on – turn it off!
- Slouch in your chair - body language and posture is important.
- Arrive late – whatever excuse you may have, it will create a bad impression
- Ask about salary or benefits – this can be discussed after the job offer
- Rely on your application form alone to sell yourself; this will not be enough!

Good luck
HR Dept.

CHRISTIAN BASIS

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES



Chapter 1 is a Christian based housing association whose roots go back to the early 1920s. The founding Memorandum and Articles of Association (the equivalent to its constitution) contain a statement of faith.

The Association bases its work on this statement (although it was written at the formation of Chapter 1 and is expressed in language that reflects this). This means all members of the Association and all our Committee and board members accept the statement.

As set out in our Equal Opportunities statement which is attached, Chapter 1 staff must have an understanding of and be in sympathy with the Christian faith, as set out in the Association's Foundations, Aims and Doctrinal Basis.

All Chapter 1's services and work are provided based on an individual's need. Employment appointments are made based on merit.

It is our normal practice to discuss this aspect of employment with Chapter 1 with applicants as part of the interview process.

Dec02
Revised Apr 09

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 As an Association based on Christian principles and practice, Chapter 1 seeks to maximise the full potential of staff, volunteers and services users. It values the diversity which each employee, volunteer and service user brings to the Association. In relation to staff this will be better achieved for the benefit of the employee and the organisation by the integration of the spirit of equal opportunities with its employment practices and human resource policies. This statement outlines how the Association will deal with employees.
- 1.2 It is our policy and practice to ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the following grounds unless it can be shown to be justifiable in accordance with employment law:
racial, ethnic or national origin, colour, cultural background, language, nationality, gender, marital or parental status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, mental capacity, age, class, HIV/Aids status, membership or non-membership of a trade union.
- 1.3 Our aim is to treat all persons associated with the Association with dignity and respect and provide an environment free from unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The Association is committed to ensuring this policy is fully effective and specifically will adhere to the following principles:
- i. In the provision of housing and care and support services, the Association will seek to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all persons.
 - ii. No person or group of persons applying for accommodation or contracts with the Association, will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons because of their racial, ethnic or national origin, colour, cultural background, language, religious belief, nationality, gender, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, disability, mental capacity, age, class, HIV/AIDS status, membership or non-membership of a trade union or any other grounds or conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
 - iii. In carrying out this equal opportunity policy, the Association actively assists disadvantaged minority groups to benefit from their services.
 - iv. It will seek to identify the needs of disadvantaged minority groups in its area of common operation by establishing close relationships with those groups and representative bodies.
 - v. As an Association whose ethos is based on Christian faith, all staff are required to be comfortable working within a Christian framework and to act in accordance with the Association's Christian ethos and values statement. In order to maintain the Christian ethos and fulfil its corporate objectives, under the provisions of the 'genuine occupational requirements' there may be occasions when it is necessary for particular roles to recruit staff who have a

Christian belief. Subject to these exceptions, the Association will seek to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all persons.

- vi. To help it fulfil its commitment to equal opportunities, the Association will collect and monitor records of the gender, race, age, religion and any disability of those applying for employment with the Association.
- vii. The Association will ensure that recruitment and selection will be assessed against relevant criteria in person specifications which are available to all candidates and which will include: skills, qualifications, experience, and abilities. Where a genuine occupational requirement exists for a post whether on grounds of gender, ethnicity or religious belief this will be stated in the person specification.
- viii. The Association will ensure that all employees will have equal chances of training and career development.
- ix. In appointing consultants, contractors and other agencies, the Association will be mindful of its commitment to equality of opportunity. There are conditions imposed by Schedule 1 of the Housing Act 1996 which restricts the use of contractors where there is an interest by Trustees or existing staff of the Association.
- x. In the operation of the Association's Board and committees and in its local 'Friends' support groups, the Association will be mindful of its commitment to equality of opportunity.
- xi. The Association expects all committee members, staff, service users and any others who work with us to abide by its Equal Opportunities Policy. Any contravention of the policy will be viewed very seriously by the Board and appropriate action will be taken.
- xii. The Association's Trustee Board has responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and recommending amendments to the policy and procedures as appropriate.

3. The Policy in Operation

- 3.1 The Association will not tolerate acts which breach this policy. Any member of staff who is found to breach this procedure will be subject to the Association's disciplinary procedure. In serious cases such behaviour will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and, as such, will result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they act towards other employees with respect and dignity. Any complaint will be dealt with promptly, objectively and fairly in line with the Grievance Procedure in Section G16 of the Operations and Procedures Manual.
- 3.3 Managers are responsible for adopting employment practices and procedures which are free from unlawful discrimination, for implementing this policy, the spirit of the policy and for ensuring that employees are familiar with and conform to the policy. All employees have a duty to cooperate with the Association in putting this policy into practice.

- 3.4 In order to protect, maintain and monitor standards within the Association, the Human Resources Director has the right to become involved at any time, where appropriate, in matters relating to the policy's practices and procedures.
- 3.5 The Association encourages all staff to discuss with their manager, or other appropriate manager, any aspects related to equal opportunities which may affect their work or their working environment.
- 3.6 Any member of staff may use the Chapter 1 Grievance Procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct.
- 3.7 All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that employees are protected against victimisation or retaliation for bringing a discrimination complaint. It will be a disciplinary offence to victimise or retaliate against an employee for bringing a complaint in accordance with this procedure.

4. Harassment

- 4.1 Harassment and bullying is defined as unwanted, unreciprocated and/or uninvited comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact that is found objectionable and offensive and that might threaten an employee's job security, or create an intimidating working environment. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual. It may be persistent or an isolated incident.
- 4.2 Harassment takes many forms and employees may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment, however employees must recognise that what is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another.
- 4.3 Although not intended to be an exhaustive list, the following are examples of bullying and harassment:
 - Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
 - Insensitive jokes and pranks (including via telephone or e mail)
 - Lewd comments about appearance
 - Unnecessary body contact
 - Threatened or actual sexual violence
 - Abusive, threatening or insulting words and behaviour
 - Threats to job security without foundation
 - Undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
 - Preventing an individual's progression by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- 4.4 An employee who has been subjected to harassment should use the Harassment Procedure in Section G9 of the Operations & Procedures Manual in to complain about the conduct.
- 4.5 All complaints of sexual harassment will be treated in the strictest of confidence.
- 4.6 An employee who brings a complaint of harassment will not suffer victimisation for having brought the complaint. However, if the complaint is untrue and has been brought in bad faith (e.g. spite), disciplinary action will be taken.

5. Disability Discrimination and Mental Capacity

- 5.1 The Association recognises that it has clear obligations towards all its employees to ensure that people with disabilities are afforded equal opportunities.
- 5.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. People who have a disability and people who have had a disability, but no longer have one are covered by the Act.
- 5.3 The Mental Capacity Act 2005 emphasises that every individual is deemed as having the mental capacity to make their own decisions, unless it can be proven otherwise. Even though an impairment of capacity may have been formally established, the principle of ensuring the individual has the maximum input possible into decision making affecting their welfare is paramount.
- 5.4 Employees who are disabled should inform, and may wish to advise the Association of any "reasonable adjustments" to their employment or working conditions which they consider to be necessary or which they consider would assist them in the performance of their duties. Careful consideration will be made to any proposals of this nature and, where reasonable, and reasonably practicable such adjustments will be made.
- 5.5 When employees become disabled in the course of their employment reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate their disability by making adjustments to their existing employment or by redeployment and appropriate training to enable employees to remain in employment wherever possible.

CRIMINAL RECORDS DISCLOSURE POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS



As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Chapter 1, complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

The Association is committed to the fair treatment of its' staff, potential staff or users of its' services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age physical/mental disability or offending background.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person with Chapter 1, and we guarantee that this information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows Chapter 1 to ask questions about your entire criminal record we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment

We make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and circumstances and background of your offences.

POLICY STATEMENT ON THE SECURE STORAGE, HANDLING, USE, RETENTION & DISPOSAL OF DISCLOSURES AND DISCLOSURE INFORMATION



General Principles

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Chapter 1 complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

Storage & Access

Disclosure information is never kept on the applicant's personal file and is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those Disclosures or Disclosure information that has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six-months, we will consult the CRB about this and will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights of the individual subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is destroyed immediately by suitable and secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any secure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

CHAPTER 1 ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

