



# DBS Checks

If you're running a group, project or workshop which includes children or adults at risk, it is important to safeguard against abuse and neglect.

You may need to check whether prospective volunteers have a criminal record which makes them unsuitable for certain roles within your group.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides these checks.



## Types of DBS Checks

**A Standard Disclosure:** This is a DBS check that gives details of a person's convictions (including spent convictions) plus any cautions, reprimands or warnings held in England and Wales on the Police National Computer.

**An Enhanced Disclosure:** This includes a Standard Disclosure, plus any locally held police information considered to be relevant to the role the person is applying for. An Enhanced Disclosure can be used for people working regularly or intensively with children or adults at risk.

**Barred List:** The DBS keeps a list of people who are barred from taking part in particular kinds of work with children and adults at risk. This type of work is known as regulated activity.

## What is Regulated Activity?

There are some types of work such as teaching or carework that people may be barred from, even if it is voluntary. This is known as "regulated activity". If your volunteers are taking part in this type of activity, it is the group leader's responsibility to make sure they are not barred from doing this.

Government guidance on what constitutes regulated activity is available to download from the DBS website. You should check this thoroughly to help you decide whether you need to get DBS checks for any of your volunteers.

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance)

### DBS Process Checklist:

- 1** Is your group eligible, or legally required, to apply for DBS disclosures for your volunteers?
- 2** If you decide that you need DBS checks, find an umbrella body. An umbrella body is an organisation which will help you apply for DBS checks. You must use an umbrella body if applying for less than 100 DBS checks a year.
- 3** Discuss how you will keep DBS information safe and how you will assess whether an individual is suitable for a role in your group. You will need to follow the policies of your umbrella body, and the **DBS Code of Practice**.
- 4** Apply for the DBS check, with help from the umbrella body.
- 5** Ask the volunteer or employee to show you the certificate when they receive it.
- 6** Assess whether the individual is suitable for the role in your group.

# Who is eligible for a DBS check?

You may sometimes wish to run a DBS check for someone whose work isn't a regulated activity. Data protection regulations mean you are not always entitled to do this, as it depends on the kind of work someone will be doing. For example, you can't check whether the person is on a barred list if the role does not include regulated activity.

You may choose to apply for Enhanced Disclosure for any volunteer or employee doing frequent, intensive or overnight work with children or adults at risk. Some funders and partners may expect you to do this.

More details of who is eligible for different levels of DBS checks are in the DBS Eligibility guidance, which is available on the DBS website listed at the end of this resource.

## Your responsibilities

It is very important to think about how you are going to use the information you will receive, and how you are going to keep it safe. It is a good idea to write a policy on how you will make sure people's privacy is protected and that everyone is treated fairly.

### Think about:

- How and where disclosure information will be stored?
- Who will have access to it?
- How long it will be kept for?
- What disclosed information would mean that an individual was unsuitable for the role in your group?

You must follow the DBS Code of Practice and treat people fairly.



If anyone in your group has a role which is defined as regulated activity, you have a legal obligation to inform the DBS if an employee or volunteer has harmed or posed a risk to a child or adult at risk whilst working with your group. In the interests of safeguarding, it is also important to do this even if you don't run any regulated activity. This is called making a DBS referral.

## Does it cost anything?

Checks for eligible volunteers are free of charge. This includes anyone who spends time helping people and is not being paid (apart from for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses). More information about what constitutes a volunteer can be found on the DBS website listed below.

## Useful links:

### Disclosure and Barring Service Website:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

### Resource Centre

(website for community groups):

[www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information](http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information)

### Safety Net (website for safeguarding):

[www.safety-net.org.uk](http://www.safety-net.org.uk)

### Ofsted:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

### NSPCC guidance on safeguarding:

[learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection](http://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection)