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**DBS and Vetting, notes by Irene Jordan, Sutton Befrienders**

**Shorter summary:**

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) used to be known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). It's beneficial to have a dedicated person within your organisation who can assist with DBS checks. When that person leaves, it's advisable to have another person take on that role. When applying for funding for a service, it's recommended to include the cost of DBS checks in the original bid. You can determine the level of DBS check required for a volunteer role by uploading the role description to the DBS website. There are three levels of DBS checks: Basic, Standard and Enhanced.

The main differences between Basic, Standard, and Enhanced DBS checks are the level of information they provide and the eligibility criteria for each level. Here's a breakdown:

**Basic DBS Check:** This check only shows unspent convictions and conditional cautions and is available to anyone regardless of their volunteer role. It's often used for roles that involve working with children or vulnerable adults on a less frequent basis.

**Standard DBS Check:** This check shows both spent and unspent convictions, as well as any cautions, reprimands or warnings on a person's record. It's available for certain job roles or industries that are listed in law, such as teachers, taxi drivers, and security personnel.

**Enhanced DBS Check:** This is the most comprehensive DBS check and includes all the information of a Standard check, plus any additional information held by local police forces or relevant agencies. It's available for jobs and volunteer roles that involve frequent contact with children or vulnerable adults, such regular one to one volunteering, social workers, teachers etc. Additionally, an Enhanced check can include barred list(s) information to show whether a person is prohibited from working with certain groups.

Overall, the level of check required depends on the Volunteer role, as well as the level of contact with vulnerable groups. DBS provides information on both spent and unspent convictions, but some spent convictions and cautions may be filtered from Standard and Enhanced checks based on specific criteria.

We at Volunteer Centre Sutton found that DBS alone is not enough to protect vulnerable people. We have a recruitment process for volunteers which includes:

* an Informal chat on the phone,
* Extensive Interview to find out about the person,
* Sending Role description and Application Form for them to fill,
* 2 references which are from people who knew you for 2 years or more who are not their family member,
* Identity document copy of photo, Address and date of birth – usually passport and utility bill so if something happens we have all the details to pass on to professionals.
* Training on the role tasks, Safeguarding and confidentiality – we send documents, videos etc before the training for them to read / watch prior to the training. Good to have face to face training with group tasks to see how they interact with each other.
* After the above when they start the role Induction and Volunteer handbook provided for them to know the boundaries. Volunteer handbook has details on what volunteers can expect of Volunteer Centre Sutton such as how they are looked after while volunteering, public liability insurance, safeguarding policy etc and what Volunteer Centre Sutton expects of the volunteers. Also provides safeguarding leaflet with the procedure to take of any safeguarding issue with the clients during their volunteering including the names of persons in our organisations and council who takes care of safeguarding.
* Volunteer Centre Sutton also does regular supervision for volunteers by the coordinators to build relationship with them and find out of any concerns.

Some organisations use social media to identify the volunteer before they start a role to find out about them but Volunteer Centre Sutton has not started doing that.

**Q & As from the Forum:**

1. Do you ask volunteers to fill a Health questionnaire?

Not allowed to ask Health details when recruiting volunteers due to discrimination issues. Only ask health questions for adaptability purposes. But it can be asked at the time of interview to match them with suitable clients, if its relevant. Regular supervision and support for the volunteers is important to find out whether they carry out the role satisfactorily.

1. Does Sutton Befrienders see Volunteers at their homes?

Sutton Befrienders does not see volunteers at their home environment, but we see clients at their homes. Charlotte suggested due to the nature of their service – home visiting volunteers for families with young children – Home-Start Sutton visit volunteers at their homes during the time of recruitment to see how they are in their home environment. Volunteers might express themselves freely at their home environment compared to outside of their homes.

1. Does a 16 / 17 year old helping at the Community Fridge need those working with them to have a DBS?

An adult should be supervising the young person and it should be in their role description that they are supervising. Need to check what the role involves and whether DBS is needed from the online questionnaire.

1. If a volunteer takes up more than 1 opportunity and needing DBS for the roles?

You do the DBS for the role with highest DBS check requirement only. Also, that Sutton Vision has to do risk assessments as their clients are visually impaired.

1. Can we ask of any conviction at the time of interview / informal chat to the volunteer?

It is up to the volunteer to disclose of any convictions at the time of interview / informal chat rather than to ask them of it. You do DBS for the role that requires DBS even after the person discloses their conviction at the time of their interview.

1. At what point do we do DBS?

Once you know for sure that the person is going to volunteer through, interview, training etc that would be a good point to do DBS otherwise we waste money by doing a DBS for the person who might change their mind about going forward. Still some people withdraw from volunteering even after we do DBS anyway.

1. What is the Update Service?

DBS is portable through update services. The volunteer needs to be made aware and then apply for update services within 30days of getting their DBS.

1. Need volunteers ad hoc for taking clients on a trip. Is it possible for Volunteer Centre Sutton to send DBS checked volunteers for this one-off opportunity?

Organisations do their own DBS and Volunteer Centre Sutton only does DBS for our projects that require DBS checking.

**Longer detailed notes from Irene**

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<https://disclosureservices.com/>  this is the company Volunteer Centre Sutton uses.

Gov.uk website to check your role for the level of DBS required:

[Find out which DBS check is right for your employee - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check)

Someone in your organisation should be responsible for DBS’s, it’s a legal requirement, it should be included in their Job Description and they should be linked into regular guidance updates this could be from NCVO, gov.uk or ASCA etc. This could be a board member of a member of staff but if they leave you must remember to pass this on the someone else! They would update changes on the Policy, staff training and any other documents for example insurance.

**Check every role based in the role description**

Responsible for training staff

1. What type of role is it?

* Healthcare or working in a hospital
* Caring for or working with children (under 18) or working in a school
* Working with elderly, ill or disabled adults
* None of these

2. What will the work involve?

If it’s a management role, choose the answer that describes the roles of the people they’ll be managing.

* Social work
* Helping ill, disabled or elderly adults with personal care
* Looking after an adult's cash, bills or shopping because they're ill, disabled or elderly
* Driving adults to where they get health or social care (but not taxi drivers)
* Being appointed to represent an adult or conduct their affairs on their behalf
* Teaching, advising or guiding adults, for example giving therapy
* Working in a care home, but not in a caring role, for example as a cleaner
* Moderating online chat or online media
* Inspecting places where adults receive health or social care
* None of these

3. Will the work be done frequently?

Answer ‘yes’ if the role involves any of the following:

* working with adults receiving care once a week or more
* working with adults receiving care for more than 3 days in any 30 day period
* ever working with adults receiving care overnight (between 2am and 6am)
* Yes
* No

*As a charity and for volunteers only, we don’t need to pay for the certificate element for both standard and enhanced, they cost us £9 but as basic is optional we do pay for the certificate, which is why it cost us £23*. Prices can vary.

**BASIC DBS CHECK**

As the name indicates, this is the least detailed level of check which you can get. It’s also quite unlike the other levels of checks. **Anyone can ask for a basic DBS check**. You can even ask for one on yourself if you’re self-employed. A basic DBS check is just a statement of your current criminal record. Current means that your certificate will contain details of offences which aren’t “spent” under rehabilitation law. So from an employer’s point of view, it’s a way of checking that you’ve been honest when asked about your criminal convictions.

**STANDARD DBS CHECKS**

The next level up in terms of detail is the standard check. This sort of check can only be carried out in connection with a specific job. Standard checks might apply to people working in financial services, or in other positions of trust. A standard check looks a bit more deeply into your criminal record. Depending on the position, the DBS might disclose offences or cautions which would be considered spent under other circumstances. Decisions about what to list on a certificate and what to leave off are made on a case by case basis. The DBS will take into account the type of crime, the length of time since it happened and the requirements of the role.

**ENHANCED DBS CHECKS**

This is the most detailed level of check and the type which gets the most attention. If you’re applying to work in a care home, or in a school or nursery, this is the sort of check you will have. An enhanced check will do everything a standard DBS check will do. It will also look into police intelligence or other information held about you. The idea behind this is that often, allegations never result in a crime or arrest. It is possible that someone could be repeatedly arrested and questioned over serious allegations of sexual or violent crimes, but never goes to court. This is the type of information which might be disclosed on a certificate.

**BARRING CHECKS**

The final type of check is a barring check. This is usually done at the same time as an enhanced disclosure but doesn’t need a separate application. Barring checks are searches of two lists held by the Home Office. These contain the names of people who have been legally blocked from working with either children or adults because of their crimes. It’s illegal for anyone who knows they are on one of those lists to apply for a job which requires a barring check.

Roles that require a Standard or above would be roles included in the [Exceptions Order 1975](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/266123/Filtering_guide_v2.3.pdf#:~:text=The%20amendmentsto%20the%20Exceptions%20Order%201975%20%282013%29%20provide,to%20employers%2C%20and%20cannot%20be%20taken%20into%20account.)

**The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

This primarily exists to support the rehabilitation into employment of reformed offenders who have stayed on the right side of the law. Under the 1974 Act, following a specified period of time which varies according to the disposal administered or sentence passed, cautions and convictions (except those resulting in prison sentences of over four years and all public protection sentences\*) may become spent. As a result the offender is regarded as rehabilitated. For most purposes the 1974 Act treats a rehabilitated person as if he or she had never committed, or been charged with charged or prosecuted for or convicted of or sentenced for the offence and, as such, they are not required to declare their spent caution(s) or conviction(s), for example, when applying for most jobs or insurance, some educational courses and housing applications.

**Is it illegal to ask an employee for a DBS check if it is not actually necessary?**

If an individual knowingly asks for a DBS check for a post which is not included in the Exceptions Order 1975 to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA), they would be in breach of Part V, section 123 of the Police Act. This is because in doing so, they are committing an offence by knowingly making a false statement for the purpose of obtaining or enabling another person to obtain a certificate under this part.

**Fine could be up to £20m**

When risk assessing the role, think about other vetting tools, I would always recommend that:

* Collect 2 references (via email or post or phone. One from a work/business address.)
* Photo ID – Passports, driving licences, ID cards
* Check address (2 bills or Bank Statements)
* Electro Role (this would possibly cost to check)
* Check social media
* There is a **Pre-volunteer training interview**
* **Volunteer training is mandatory** **and includes safeguarding** assessment of learning is built in throughout
* **Post-volunteer training interview** happens to guarantee accurate understanding and to address any concerns of character (this could be done in the volunteer’s home)
* **Volunteer training is at least two separate sessions** (anyone can show up once and it shows commitment) ((two sessions also helps you build a relationship and be better able to assess a strong match))
* **Volunteer training happens with at least three participants so you can review how they treat and interact with others so you can gauge how they would treat vulnerable groups.**
* **Health questionnaire** should be done at the end of your recruitment process.

Volunteer training is part of the application process, like an interview – just because they do it, doesn’t mean they are in and their performance in training is addressed in a post-training meeting.

Other safeguarding tools

* Volunteer agreement or handbook
* Supervision

**Keeping in touch is a great way to pick up any issues.**

**Safeguarding leaflets including contact number and info explaining the volunteers’ role/boundaries**

If you decide not to request a DBS for every member of staff and/or volunteers, check your DBS policy and Pub Lib insurance reflects this.