

Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance (WDBF) Safeguarding Registry

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1. INTRODUCTION TO WDBF SAFEGUARDING REGISTRY

WDBF Safeguarding Registry provides an umbrella service for organisations eligible to request Criminal Records Checks for staff from the DBS Disclosure Service.

2. INTRODUCTION

Criminal records checks help those recruiting staff to identify candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (formerly known as the Criminal Records Bureau or CRB), is the government agency set up to administer these checks.

The DBS's aim is to help employers make safer recruitment decisions, especially when recruiting people into positions of trust. A number of roles, especially those involving children or vulnerable adults, are entitled to a criminal record check. The DBS enables organisations to access these checks as part of good recruitment practice.

Applications for criminal record checks have to be made through a Registered Body. Those organisations who are not a Registered Body in their own right, may access checks through an umbrella organisation.

The WDBF Safeguarding Registry is one such umbrella organisation. The Safeguarding Registry services are open to organisations whose workers qualify for a DBS check.

3. WHAT IS DISCLOSURE?

A Disclosure is a document containing information held by the police and government departments that provides details of a person's criminal record, including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer (PNC). It can also contain details from lists and other information held by the DBS as well as information held by local police forces.

A Disclosure enables an organisation to check the background of an applicant (paid or voluntary) to ensure they do not have a history that makes them unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. A Disclosure is an essential element in the recruitment process within any church or organisation, forming part of a recruitment policy that should include interviewing, checking references, staff supervision, training and ongoing support.

4. CHARGES

The DBS charges a statutory fee in relation to those requesting checks for paid positions. There is no statutory fee in regard to volunteer worker applications, although umbrella bodies charge an administration fee.

The Safeguarding Registry standard administration charge for checks is £12. Each check for a paid worker has an additional charge of £44 charged by the DBS.

5. THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Organisations using the Safeguarding Registry for applying for Disclosures will need to appoint a person(s) within the organisation to manage the process within the organisation. This person will usually be the main point of contact between the Safeguarding Registry and the organisation. This is usually referred to as the Parish / Organisation Representative.

A criminal records check is only part (albeit an essential one) of a safer recruitment process. This process is crucial in preventing unsuitable or dangerous individuals gaining access to vulnerable groups. It includes the completion of an application form, a confidential self-declaration form, an interview, taking up references and a criminal records check.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar the person from being appointed unless children or vulnerable adults would be put at risk.

If a past conviction is revealed on a certificate, we strongly advise that contact is made with the Safeguarding Registry who can give advice in order to reach the appropriate employment decision.

Full details of the Safer Recruitment process can be found on the Diocesan website.

6. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CODE OF PRACTICE

Introduction

Churches and organisations using the Disclosure Service are required to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice. Individuals or organisations that do not comply risk failing in their obligations, or even committing an offence, under the Human Rights Act and Data Protection Acts. The DBS Code of Practice requires:

Fair Treatment

All applicants for positions must be treated impartially (including those who have a criminal record), and not discriminated against unfairly. Organisations must have a written policy, though this does not mean an informed decision cannot be made where information revealed about an individual raises concerns in relation to the safety of children and vulnerable adults.

Sample Safe Storage and Handling of Information Policy

Churches/ organisations must have a written policy on the correct handling, storing and retention of Disclosure information. (See Sample Safe Storage and Handling of Information Policy. Appendix 2).

Good Practice by the Registered Body/Umbrella Organisation

As a Registered Body, the Safeguarding Registry will take all reasonable steps to ensure those using the service are observing the DBS Code of Practice and complying with DBS requirements.

The DBS operates a strict code of practice for its own handling and keeping of personal information and data. They also have a system for monitoring Registered Bodies that includes a formal complaints procedure. This can be accessed if there are concerns that the Registered Body is not working to DBS policies and procedures.