



DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CHECKS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.** Many of Bath Welcomes Refugees (BWR) clients are in extremely vulnerable situations because of language barriers, trauma and other factors. Because of this BWR must take a cautionary approach to ensure that the people working with them (both volunteers and staff members) are appropriate and safe. Volunteer roles at BWR are, therefore, subject to both references, and a DBS check.
- 1.2.** Whilst DBS checks may be time consuming and costly because of high turnover, the damage to BWR's reputation could be significant should an incident arise, and suitable checks had not been undertaken.
- 1.3.** **All** volunteers having contact with clients should be DBS checked. But it is also recognised that there is a cost attached to this process and that some potential volunteers may be unsure as to exactly what the role actually entails and the BWR team leader may be unsure of the suitability of the volunteer for the role.
- 1.4.** Potential volunteers may attend one trial session within a GROUP setting, provided they are supervised by an agreed designated person for the whole session. Under no circumstances should the potential volunteer be left alone with children, or anyone considered to be vulnerable which includes adults. Following the trial session, the team leader and potential volunteer will decide whether to proceed with the DBS check. No further participation by the potential volunteer can take place until the satisfactory DBS check has been completed.
- 1.5.** A satisfactory DBS check **MUST** be completed before a potential volunteer begins working in people's homes, such as resettlement and befriending volunteers or home teachers or those providing benefit or other advice.

2. PROCESS

- 2.1.** Prior to a person being accepted as a volunteer it should be explained to them that they will need to undergo a DBS check. When they receive the DBS certificate from uCheck, the DBS checking agency, they are required to show it to the BWR Volunteer Coordinator to prove the process has been completed.
- 2.2.** They should be made aware that these checks may reveal criminal offences and/or convictions. This gives them the opportunity to disclose any potential issues and discuss any potential concerns depending on the role they are applying to undertake. This would also give them the opportunity to withdraw their application.

3. IN THE EVENT THAT A DISCLOSURE REVEALS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE AND/OR CONVICTION

3.1. A BWR Management representative, the Volunteer Coordinator and the Safeguarding Lead will take the candidate through a separate risk assessment process. Each situation will be considered individually.

The risk assessment will consider:

- the nature of the offence
- when it occurred
- the candidate's explanation of how and why it occurred, including a context to
- the offence
- what is different now and why
- signs of remorse, evidence of change, current attitudes, current circumstances.

The risk assessment process will include:

- An early discussion between the Team Leader, Volunteer Coordinator and BWR's Safeguarding Lead to consider the disclosure and plan the risk assessment. In some circumstances an immediate decision might be made to bar the individual from volunteering with BWR.
- Inviting the candidate to attend a face-to-face meeting with two of the above people to discuss the disclosure.
- Asking the candidate direct and relevant questions to gain information on the points listed above, to allow the BWR representatives at the meeting to make recommendations to BWR.

Points to be considered:

- It might not be considered necessary to supervise a candidate who has been convicted under, for example, the Public Order Act for taking part in peaceful public demonstrations.
- Speeding offence/s might be considered a risk if the role of the volunteer is to involve driving service users, and if the attitude of the candidate has not changed sufficiently in relation to the conviction.
- The role of remorse and the candidate's situation at the time of the offence, especially if convicted at a young age or under the influence of others, may be mitigating.

4. FOLLOWING THE RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Further discussion with Management Committee and BWR Safeguarding Lead, to decide which action to take:

- To allow the candidate to work as a volunteer with BWR or
- To reject the candidate's application.
- Inform the candidate in writing to BWR's decision.

4.2 The Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding should be notified of any decision to accept the candidate's application prior to the candidate being notified.

4.3 If the candidate becomes a BWR volunteer the CRM will hold a record of the risk assessment process. The volunteer should be made aware of this.

5. CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED TO NOTIFY INSURERS

5.1 In the event it is agreed to accept somebody with a conviction as a volunteer the Trustee Safeguarding lead will decide whether BWR's insurer needs to be informed on a case-by-case basis.

6. DATA PROTECTION

BWR processes such criminal records in accordance with its data protection policy and privacy notice. All volunteers and staff are informed in advance through BWR's employee privacy notice that they would undergo DBS checks. BWR stores such data in accordance with its retention practices. Any information that is found as a result of the DBS process will be stored securely by BWR.

BWR has completed an Appropriate Policy Document in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation.