



DBS Checks for Volunteers and Paid Staff

Introduction

This paper is based on a national document entitled *Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment* which was published by the Church of England on 24 June 2015. Failure to implement and adhere to national guidance may invalidate church insurance.

Criminal record checks are just one element of a safer recruitment process. For details of the full process, please see the document entitled *Safer Recruitment of Volunteers and Paid Staff*, which is available on the diocesan website.

Purpose, scope and definitions

This paper sets out the requirements for volunteers or paid staff to have a criminal record check. It mainly covers roles which are most commonly found in a parish context, although Appendices A and B can be used for other roles. If in any doubt please consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

This paper uses the following definition of terms:

- **Child** - anyone under the age of 18 years.
- **Adult at risk** - a person aged 18 years or over who is experiencing or at risk of abuse (including neglect). The term 'vulnerable adult' is also used in some legislation.
- **DBS** - the government's Disclosure and Barring Service which carries out criminal record checks.

Types of DBS Checks

A person can only have a DBS Check if they are aged 16 or over. There are three types of DBS Checks:

- **Standard**. This checks for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings.
- **Enhanced**. This includes the same as the standard check plus any additional information held by local police that's considered relevant to working with adults at risk or with children.
- **Enhanced with barred list information**. This is like the enhanced check, but includes a check of the relevant DBS barred list (adults at risk or children).

Certain church activities fall within the government's definition of a 'regulated activity' (see Appendices A and B). This determines whether an Enhanced DBS Check must, or must not, include barred list information.

DBS Checks are free to volunteers, but there is a cost for paid staff.

Parish Roles Requiring a DBS Check

Clergy, Readers and lay workers authorised by the Bishop

An Enhanced DBS Check with barred list information is required for all clergy, Readers and lay workers authorised by the Bishop.

In a parish context this includes:

- Beneficed clergy;
- Clergy who hold the Bishop's licence or permission to officiate;
- Readers and other lay workers who hold the Bishop's licence or permission to officiate;
- Those training for any of these roles.

Parish Safeguarding Officers

An Enhanced DBS Check with barred list information is required for all Parish Safeguarding Officers.

Churchwardens and PCC members

Many parishes provide activities for adults at risk or children. Typical activities include:

- Sunday schools or 'Messy Church';
- Youth groups;
- 'Parent and Toddler' groups;
- Home visiting schemes for the housebound.

If a PCC sponsors (in its own name) any activities for adults at risk or children, all PCC members are eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check without barred list information. This is because the PCC is a charity, and PCC members are the trustees of the charity.

In such parishes, the Diocese of Coventry requires that all churchwardens have an Enhanced DBS Check without barred list information.¹ The lay PCC member who takes the lead on safeguarding matters at PCC meetings must also have an Enhanced DBS Check. In many parishes this will be the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Where a PCC does not sponsor any activities for adults at risk or children (in its own name), churchwardens and other PCC members are not eligible for a DBS Check.

Volunteers and staff who teach, train, instruct, supervise or care for children

An Enhanced DBS Check is always required for volunteers and staff (aged 16 or over) who teach, train, instruct, supervise or care for children. In most cases barred list information is also required - see Appendix A for clarification.

In a parish context this includes:

- Sunday School or 'Messy Church' teachers, leaders or assistants;
- Youth leaders, workers or assistants;
- Children's leaders, workers or assistants;
- Leaders of 'Parent and Toddler' groups;²

¹ If a parish has fewer than two churchwardens, then other lay PCC members must be DBS checked instead.

² Parent helpers who supervise their own children do not need to be DBS checked, nor does any group that is run on a 'self-help' basis.

- Family workers who work with children or their leader;
- A music leader where the choir or music group includes children;
- A tower captain where the bell ringers include children;
- A head server where the servers include children;
- Any organist, musician, singer, bell ringer or server who teach/train children.

Volunteers and staff who provide pastoral care for adults at risk

An Enhanced DBS Check is usually required for volunteers and staff (age 16 or over) who provide pastoral care for adults at risk, and barred list information is also sometimes required. Please see Appendix B for clarification.

In a parish context this includes:

- Parish pastoral assistants;
- Pastoral home visitors;
- Street pastors;
- Authorised listeners;
- Pastoral outreach workers.

Drivers and supervisors who convey adults at risk or children

An Enhanced DBS Check is always required for volunteers and staff who drive a vehicle to convey children. In most cases barred list information is also required (see Appendix A for clarification). The same applies for any person supervising or caring for the children being conveyed.

An Enhanced DBS Check is usually required for volunteers and staff who drive a vehicle to convey adults at risk. Barred list information is also sometimes required (see Appendix B for clarification).

Please note that private arrangements among parents and friends are exempt from these requirements.

Other roles with adults at risk or children

Only the most common parish roles with adults at risk or children have been mentioned above.

For other roles with children, please see Appendix A. For other roles with adults at risk, please see Appendix B.

Parish Roles Not Eligible for a DBS Check

It is a criminal offence for someone to apply for a DBS Check (or barred list information) if they are not eligible.

In most parishes, the following roles are not eligible for a DBS Check:

- Safeguarding Evidence Checkers;
- Churchwardens and PCC members where the PCC does not sponsor (in its own name) any activities for adults at risk or children;
- Music leaders where none of the choir or music group include adults at risk or children;
- Tower captains where none of the bell ringers include adults at risk or children;
- Head Servers where none of the servers include adults at risk or children;
- Any organists, musicians, singers, bell ringers or servers who do not teach/train adults at risk or children.
- Parish vergers;

- Caretakers;
- Flower arrangers;
- Sidespeople;
- Refreshment helpers;
- Shop staff;
- Foodbank helpers (unless undertaking work with adults at risk or children).

This is not an exhaustive list. To check the eligibility of other roles, please see Appendices A and B. If in any doubt, please consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Roles not eligible for a DBS Check are still eligible for a basic criminal record check via Disclosure Scotland (even for people in England). These checks are not recommended by the Diocese of Coventry. However, for parishes that are interested, further information can be found at <https://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk>

Referrals to the DBS

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (SVGA) places a duty on organisations involved in regulated activities to make a referral to the DBS in certain circumstances.³

The DBS must be notified if an organisation dismisses or removes a person from volunteering/working with adults at risk or children in a regulated activity (or may have removed such a person if they had not left or resigned) because the person has:

- Been cautioned or convicted of a relevant offence (eg a serious sexual or violent offence); or
- Engaged in relevant conduct in relation to adults at risk or children (eg an action or neglect that has harmed someone or put them at risk of harm as defined under the SVGA); or
- Satisfied the harm test in relation to adults at risk or children (ie a risk of harm still exists as defined under the SVGA).

Advice for the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should always be sought prior to a referral to the DBS.

Frequently Asked Questions about DBS Checks

How are DBS checks carried out?

DBS checks within the Diocese of Coventry are carried out via an online system provided by Access Personal Checking Services (APCS). Within a parish, the system can only be accessed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer or by other authorised people.

If a DBS check is clear, APCS will notify by email the person in the parish who authorised the DBS application. This information can then be passed to those responsible for the recruitment process. There is no need for anyone to see the DBS certificate.

If a DBS check is not clear, APCS will only notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will then assess the risk and make a recommendation to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

³ Although this paper uses the term 'adult at risk', the term 'vulnerable adult' is actually used in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

When does a DBS check need to be renewed?

The House of Bishops has decided that criminal record checks must be renewed every **five years**. This is best done via the DBS Update Service (see below).

Should there be a delay in renewing a DBS check beyond the fifth year, the person must stand down from any role that requires a DBS check pending completion of the DBS process.

How does the DBS Update Service work?

The DBS Update Service enables an applicant to have their DBS certificate kept up-to-date and to take it with them from role to role.

An application to the Update Service must be made within 19 calendar days of a DBS certificate being issued. The Update Service is free for volunteers, but requires an annual subscription for paid staff. Further information can be found in a leaflet entitled *DBS Update Service – A guide for applicants*, which is available on the diocesan website at www.dioceseofcoventry.org/SafeguardingResources

Can a previous DBS check be used for a new role?

Under certain circumstances, a DBS certificate obtained for one role can be re-used for a new role. This term for this is 'portability'.

A person's DBS certificate is portable within the same Church of England benefice provided that:

- It covers the same workforce as the new role (ie adults at risk or children); and
- It covers the same level as the new role (ie Standard or Enhanced); and
- It contains the relevant barred list information (for adults at risk or children as required).

A person's DBS certificate is portable from a different benefice (or another organisation) provided that:

- All three of the above conditions have been met; and
- The applicant had previously registered with the DBS Update Service; and
- The outcome of the DBS Update Service has been seen and is completely clear.

A person's DBS certificate is never portable under any of the following circumstances:

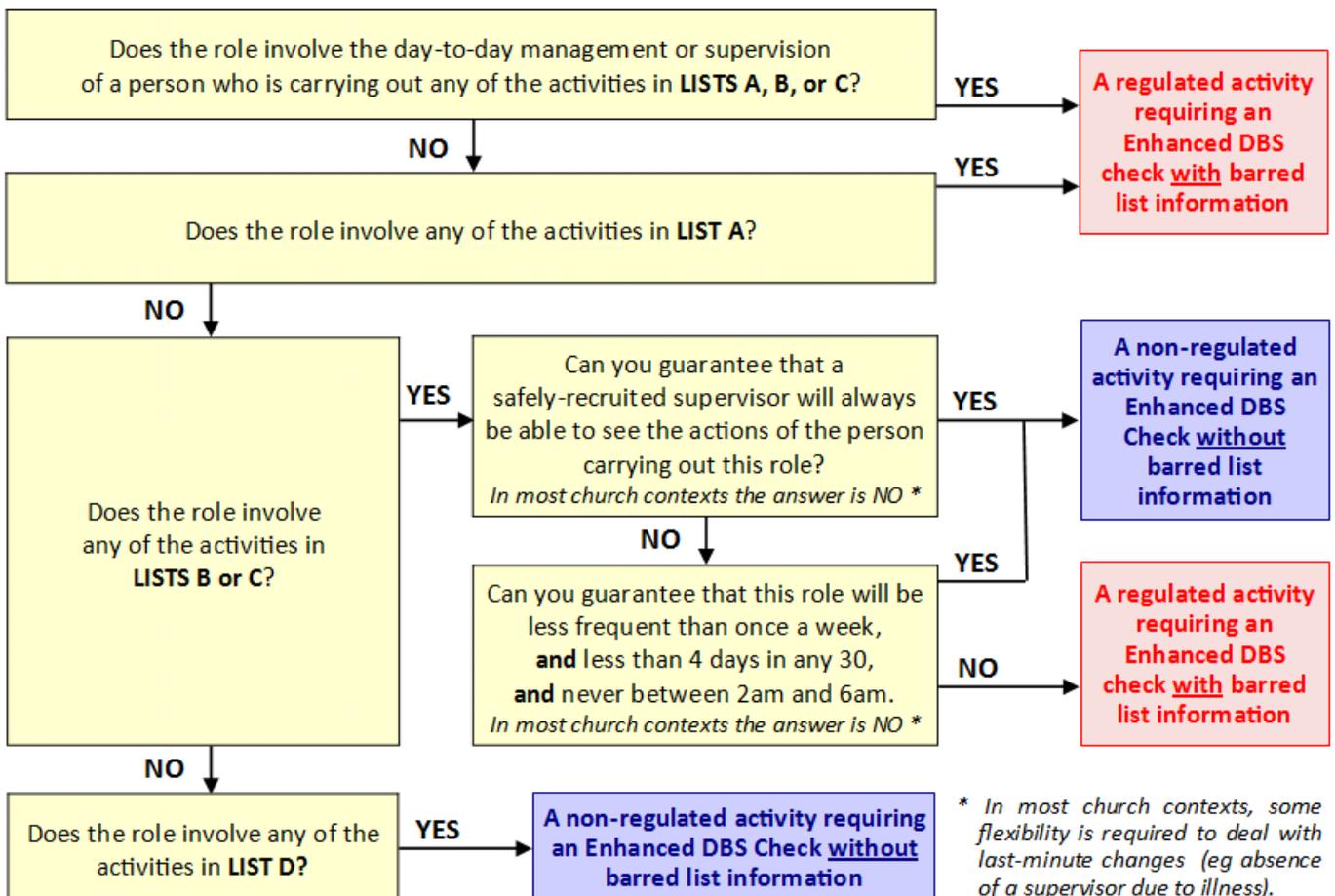
- They move from working with children (for which they were checked) to working with adults at risk (for which they were not checked) – or vice versa; or
- The new role requires a higher level of DBS check (eg they move from a non-regulated activity to a regulated activity); or
- They are seeking to be ordained, a Reader or a lay worker authorised by the Bishop.

Appendix A - DBS Checks for Roles with Children

A DBS Check is required for anyone (age 16 or over) having a role which includes any of the following:

LIST A	LIST B	LIST C	LIST D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing assistance with toileting, washing, bathing or dressing (or teaching a child to carry out these tasks) for reasons of age, illness or disability; • Providing assistance with eating or drinking (or teaching a child to carry out these tasks) for reasons of illness or disability; • Providing healthcare; • Child-minding; • Fostering a child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervision of children; • Providing children with advice/guidance on physical, emotional or educational well-being; • Driving a vehicle used to convey children (but not private arrangements among parents); • Supervising or caring for children being conveyed; • Moderating an online forum for children. 	<p>Any activity that takes place in a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School; • Nursery school; • Further Education establishment; • Children’s home; • Childcare premises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any activity involving regular and significant contact with children (which is not covered by LISTS A, B or C); • Any position of responsibility for children’s work (eg a school governor or a trustee of a children’s charity).

The following chart indicates the type of DBS Check that is required:



* In most church contexts, some flexibility is required to deal with last-minute changes (eg absence of a supervisor due to illness).

Appendix B - DBS Checks for Roles with Adults at Risk

A DBS Check is usually required for anyone (age 16 or over) having a role with adults at risk which includes any of the following:

LIST A	LIST B	LIST C	LIST D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting with cash, bills or shopping for reasons of age, illness or disability; Conveying adults (other than friends or family) to or from places where they receive personal care, healthcare or social work - for reasons of age, illness or disability; Providing personal care for reasons of age, illness or disability (including assistance with eating, drinking, toileting, washing, bathing, dressing, oral care, or the care of skin, hair or nails); Supervising or prompting personal care, or teaching someone else to provide personal care; Providing healthcare or social work (by a trained professional); Assisting with the conduct of an adult's own affairs (eg powers of attorney). 	<p>Being a trustee of a charity that works with adults at risk.</p>	<p>Providing other types of assistance (not covered by List A) for reasons of age, illness or disability. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any form of care or supervision; Any form of treatment of therapy; Any form of training, teaching, advice or guidance; Providing transportation (but also see 'Conveying adults' in LIST A); Providing advocacy services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any activity that takes place in a care home; Any activity that takes place in a prison; Moderating a public electronic interactive communication service.

The following chart clarifies if a DBS Check is required, and if so, which type:

