

## 5. DBS & PVG Disclosure Guidance

In England and Wales all individuals 16 years or over who engage regularly in an unsupervised role that involves the care, supervision, instruction or education of children are required to complete an Enhanced DBS application form.

In Scotland all individuals over 14 years who regularly undertake similar activities are required to become a member of the PVG scheme.

We define regularly to mean:

- More than once a month
- Intensively, more than four days in a month
- Overnight or between the hours of 2am and 6am

However in line with changes to the DBS regulations it is possible for some volunteers to be 'supervised', and therefore they will not be required to complete a DBS application. *For more information see Section 8 – Supervised Members.*

**What is DBS?** The Disclosure & Barring Service is an Executive Agency of the Home Office that helps organisations make informed recruitment and licensing decisions by offering access to police and government records.

**What is PVG?** PVG is the 'Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme'. All PVG applications are sent to the CRBS the clearing house for Volunteer PVG disclosures in Scotland. The CRBS is a registered body with Disclosure Scotland part of the Scottish Executive.

DBS application forms (England only) are available to complete online. Members should be signposted to [www.woodcraft.org.uk/dbs-online](http://www.woodcraft.org.uk/dbs-online).

All PVG forms (Scotland only) are available from Folk Office on request. Guidance is provided inside each form as an insert (*see appendices*). **Please note that we currently only process hard copy PVG forms.**

### The Membership Secretaries role in the DBS Disclosure Process

As a Membership Secretary in England and Wales your role in this process is 'the recruiter' or 'responsible person' who deals with all new membership applications.

*Your role:*

1. To identify whether the new member requires a DBS disclosure.
2. Explain the process to new members, sharing with them relevant policies and supporting documentation.
3. Sign post members to the online DBS system.
4. Verify the applicants ID. *Further information on verifying a members ID can be found in section 6.*
5. How to verify a members DBS application can be found in the 'DBS online guidance for Membership Secretaries' (*appendices 21*)

If the volunteer has completed a paper membership form this should be forwarded to Folk Office. The DBS application will be forwarded to the Disclosure & Barring Service electronically for processing.

## **DBS online (England only)**

In 2016 we took the decision to introduce a DBS online system to improve our DBS compliance. We contracted online 'GBG disclosures' to process our applications.

Members can now go on to the online system and using the code word 'icamp' to create and complete their Woodcraft Folk DBS application form. The online form has identical questions to those that are on the paper form.

Once the application is completed the registered Membership Secretary will be emailed an alert that there is an application form ready to be verified online. As part of the verification process you **MUST** witness the applicant's identity documents and then input these details on to the online system. Full details on how to verify an online application are available in the '*DBS online guidance*' *appendices 21*.

All Membership Secretaries will have their own personal login for the online DBS system which will take them to their Districts area on the GBG site. In this area they'll be able to **verify DBS applications, track DBS applications** and **check any pending or queried applications**.

Once an application has been verified it will be sent electronically direct to GBG who will check the form, countersign and send to the Disclosure & Barring service for processing. The turnaround for processing DBS applications can be anything from 8hrs up to 4 weeks. However we've found that they're a lot quicker than paper applications.

One of the main benefits to moving to DBS online is that we'll no longer need to rely on Membership Secretaries to witness DBS certificates because the online system provides us with the outcomes of each certificate. We'll only request Membership Secretaries to witness certificates if the system has advised us that there is a conviction/caution/warning listed that we need to vet.

## **DBS Disclosure certificates (England & Wales)**

From the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013 the Disclosure & Barring Service stopped producing certificates for organisations. Only the applicant now receives a copy of their DBS certificate. This was introduced by the Disclosure & Barring service to give applicants more control over their personal data.

**Members who have completed paper DBS application forms will still have to show us a copy of their returned DBS certificate.** We require the help of all Membership Secretaries to facilitate this process by checking member's certificates and reporting back to Folk office by completing a '**DBS returns form**' (example in appendices).

Folk office will need to the following information:

- Member's name
- Certificate number & Date of issue
- If any convictions, warnings, reprimands, cautions are listed? If yes, provide all details.

All DBS certificates **MUST** be witnessed by the Membership Secretary or Folk Office unless the member has completed their DBS application online. If a DBS certificate is not witnessed we're unable to determine whether the member has a conviction/reprimand/warning etc that would prevent them from working with children and

young people. If a member does not show their certificate to the Membership Secretary they're considered to NOT have a disclosure and have NOT completed our vetting procedures as per our Safeguarding policy and procedure.

If a member misplaces their certificate before it is witnessed they will need to request a reprint from the Disclosure & Barring Service directly. The DBS give applicants only 90 days from the date of their certificates issue to request a reprint. If they miss this cut off point they'll need to complete another purple DBS application form.

If any convictions are listed on a members DBS certificate please ensure to treat this both sensitively and confidentially. On receipt of any DBS return forms with convictions listed Folk Office will carry out a risk assessment in accordance with our Members Screening policy (full copy available in the appendices) and will notify both the Membership Secretary and member of the outcome.

Membership Secretaries can enlist the help from Group leaders to check members DBS certificates. You can nominate a member in each of your groups to carry out the task of checking DBS certificates, filling in the Returns form and sending them back to Folk office. All helpers will need to be advised on the following policies *confidentiality & data protection, member screening and recruitment of ex-offenders*.

**DBS certificates (members who have applied for their DBS online)** - The online system provides us with the outcomes of each DBS certificate processed so we no longer need to rely on Membership Secretaries to witness these certificates. We'll only request Membership Secretaries to witness certificates if the system has advised us that there is a conviction/caution/warning listed that we need to vet.

## **The DBS Update Scheme**

The Disclosure & Barring Service introduced the DBS Update Service in 2013. The new Update service will allow organisations to carry out online Status checks on individuals DBS certificates. So applicants now only need ONE DBS certificate which will be portable and can be used by similar organisations working with children & young people.

The system has been set for individuals to subscribe to the Update scheme separately to completing their DBS application. They can either apply whilst their application is in processing or within 19days of receiving their DBS certificate. Subscription is free of charge for volunteers

Woodcraft Folk members can apply directly to the Update Scheme by going to [www.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.gov.uk/dbs) or Folk Office can sign them up to the scheme. All they'll need to do is either:

- Complete an '**Opt in form**' found as an insert in every paper DBS application form
- Advise Folk Office by email or
- Fill in the tick box on their membership form.

Members can also give us permission to run an online check every 3 years without sending them a reminder as long as they're a current member of Woodcraft Folk.

Once a member has subscribed to the Update service (*either with Woodcraft Folk or another organisation*) the only information they'll need to give us is a completed '**Online Update Service Check form**' when they're due for renewal. The form asks for their DBS certificate number, date of birth and consent for us to carry out an

online status check instead of completing another DBS application form.

**Please note we'll only accept DBS certificates from other organisations if the member has joined the Update Scheme using that particular certificate.**

## **The Membership Secretaries role in the PVG Disclosure Process (Scotland only)**

1. To identify whether the new member requires to join the PVG scheme or is already an Existing member of PVG. Existing members of PVG need to complete a different application to those who are applying for the first time.
2. Explain the process to new members, sharing with them relevant policies and supporting documentation.
3. Check the application form to ensure it has been completed properly and is consistent with information give on the individual's Woodcraft Folk Membership application form.
4. Verify the applicants ID. *Further information on verifying a members ID can be found in section 7.*
5. Complete PART E of the application form, the CRBS coversheet and Woodcraft Folk ID declaration as instructed by the guidance. *For more detail see section 7.*
6. Forward the Membership form, coversheet, Woodcraft Folk ID declaration form and PVG application together to the Membership & Groups Officer.

### **Existing members of the PVG scheme (Scotland only)**

In some cases new members may have already joined of the PVG scheme via different organisation. Instead of applying to join the PVG these members must complete an 'Existing PVG Scheme Member Application' form so that we can run a status check on their membership. This 'Existing PVG Scheme Member Application' form only requires the applicant's personal details and their PVG Scheme ID number. Along with helping them complete their application you will also need to, verify their ID, complete a CRBS coversheet and a Woodcraft ID declaration. Instructions on how to complete the application are provided as an insert in every form.

### **Whilst checking the application form, please be mindful of the following common mistakes, as highlighted by the PVG Scotland.**

- Five-year address history. Gaps in address histories are by far the biggest cause of rejected forms. It is important to ensure that the months match so that there are no gaps in continuity.
- Middle name missing. When an applicant submits information such as a driving licence number and it indicates that a middle name exists, but it has not been detailed on the application form, the DBS will reject the form and return it for clarification.

### **The following dos and don't should also ensure PVG applications are processed as smoothly and efficiently as possible:**

#### **Do:**

- Make sure you use BLACK or BLACK INK throughout and write clearly in BLOCK CAPITALS ONLY.
- Check to ensure the applicant is completing a Woodcraft Folk Disclosure form. If the organisation name is not printed on the front of the form please discard.
- Place only one letter or number in the box
- Cross out any errors on the form and amend the correction to the right of the error. If there is no space to write next to a particular piece of information, please write as close to the text as possible.
- Ensure the both the form reference number the applicants name are noted on the continuation sheet (if applicable).
- Follow the guidance provided when checking application forms to ensure all mandatory fields are complete.
- Ensure signatures keep within the space provided in the box and only BLACK INK is used.

**Don't:**

- Use staples to attach any cheques, continuation sheets or additional information.
- Place any stickers or stamps on the form i.e. featuring addresses or dates.
- Use correction fluid on the form.
- Allow text to cross the edges of the boxes on the application form.
- Put a line through a section of the form or state a field is 'not applicable', if it's not relevant please leave blank.
- Send in any original or copies of identity documents with the Disclosure application form.

**What to do with their PVG forms once they've been completed?**

**Once an application form is completed it will need to be sent to the Membership & Groups Officer at Folk Office** to be checked for any inaccuracies, countersigned and sent off to Volunteer Scotland for processing.

The Membership & Groups Officer will check the form to make sure there are no inaccuracies. If any are found the member will be contacted directly by either phone or email. If no response is received after 5 days a second attempt will be made. The form will be sent back to the member if no answer has been received after a total of 14days.

**What do Disclosure Scotland do with the forms?**

Disclosure Scotland receive on average 70,000 forms a week and each one is given a preliminary check for errors or omissions. Around 10% of all forms are not completed correctly and have to be returned. Make sure yours is not one of them!! The details of all applications are then transferred electronically on to a secure computer system and the searches begin with 24hrs of receipt.

**What do PVG & DBS check?**

The first search is against the information held on the Police National Computer (PNC). This part of the process take up to 10 days. The PNC holds all convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings in England and Wales and most of the relevant convictions in Scotland. Plans are being made to supplement these records with criminal convictions from Northern Ireland.

Woodcraft Folk members in England and Wales also have their details checked against the Protection of Children Act (POCA) list, and any information held under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (formerly list 99).

In Scotland, the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 (PoCSA), makes it compulsory for those being appointed to childcare positions as defined in Schedule 2 of PoCSA (as of 11/04/05) to be checked against the Disqualified from Working with Children List (DCWL).

- **In England and Wales, when all checks are completed the disclosure is printed and the certificate will be dispatched to the member only.**
- **The DBS aims to issue 90% of all Enhanced checks in 28 days and Standard checks in 10 days.**
- **In Scotland once the checks are completed the PVG certificate will be printed and dispatched. One copy is sent to the member and the other to Folk Office.**