

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy, May 2014



Woodcraft Folk, as a provider of 'regulated activity' to children and young people, are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This enables Woodcraft Folk to ask staff, members, volunteers and applicants to complete Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service and Protecting Vulnerable Groups Disclosure applications. These disclosures will show unspent criminal reprimands, cautions and convictions. Enhanced Disclosures will also sometimes show spent criminal convictions if they potentially pose a risk to children and young people.

Having a criminal record **will not automatically bar** someone from working or volunteering with Woodcraft Folk. Any individual with a criminal record will have their application assessed for risk to children and young people and will depend on the nature of the position applied for and the circumstances and background of their offences.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Disclosure Scotland service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust including membership, Woodcraft Folk complies fully with the DBS/PVG Codes of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for paid positions or voluntary membership fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any individual subject to a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

Policy Principles

- Woodcraft Folk are committed to the fair treatment of its staff, members, volunteers, potential staff and volunteer or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- Woodcraft Folk have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS/PVG applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- An Enhanced DBS check/PVG membership is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where an Enhanced DBS check/PVG membership is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an Enhanced DBS check/PVG membership will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Where an Enhanced DBS check/PVG membership is to form part of the recruitment process, we require all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to the Lead Safeguarding Officer and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- Unless the nature of the position allows Woodcraft Folk to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

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- We ensure that all those in Woodcraft Folk who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or volunteer engagement.
- We make every individual completing a DBS check/PVG membership application aware of the existence of the DBS/PVG Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check/PVG membership application with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment or volunteering.

Example Positions requiring DBS check/PVG membership

All volunteer and paid positions that require individuals to work with children and young people are subject to Enhanced DBS check/PVG membership e.g. Mentor, Group leader, Camp Chief, Group helper, Youth Participation Officer, Clan leader, Trainer

Other positions of trust, not working directly with children and young people, also require DBS/CRB Disclosures e.g. Finance Manager, Treasurer, Membership Administrator, Membership Secretary, Safeguarding Officer, Trustee, Centre Warden

DBS/CRBs are not age specific, and as such are sought for the role an individual is undertaking. It is not an automatic requirement for everyone over 16 or 18 within our organisation, but is for those taking responsibility for children and young people.

The above roles are for illustrative purposes only and are not exhaustive. Each role should be individually assessed to ascertain whether or not it meets the requirements of the DBS or PVG schemes.

Applicants - What should you do?

If you have any criminal cautions, convictions or reprimands and are applying to work or volunteer for a position that requires a DBS check or PVG membership it is important that you appropriately share information about your offending background. This open disclosure will help you understand any potential restrictions that might exist about certain convictions and roles.

If you are applying for a paid position you will automatically be asked to complete a criminal record disclosure form. If you are applying for a volunteer post, you can share your criminal record by;

1. Discussing it with your local Membership Secretary when you complete your DBS or PVG Disclosure form
2. Sending a letter to the Lead Safeguarding Officer describing the nature of the offence, date of offence and any other information you feel is relevant to share

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Please note a criminal record will not automatically bar you from working or volunteering with Woodcraft Folk. Any recruitment decision will be based on risk to children and young people and will take into account:

- The role applied for
- The nature of the offending background e.g. offence, your age at the time of the offence, repeat offending and the time period since the offending activity

Existing staff or volunteer members – What should you do?

If whilst working or volunteering for Woodcraft Folk you are subject to a conviction, caution or reprimand you should discuss this with your line manager or local Membership Secretary in all cases in which the offence involves violence or children. A criminal record will not automatically bar you from working or volunteering with Woodcraft Folk. Any decision around your future role will be based on risk to children and young people and will take into account:

- The role undertaken
- The nature of the offence e.g. offence, your age at the time of the offence and repeat offending behaviour

Membership Secretaries – What should you do?

As a Membership Secretary you should ensure that all new and existing members are informed of relevant Woodcraft Folk policies:

- Safeguarding
- Recruitment of ex-offenders
- Equal opportunities

You may also find yourself in the position where a new member, or an existing member, may wish to disclose information about their criminal record. Following the Disclosure Code of Practice, you should:

1. Make all members aware of our policy on recruiting ex-offenders
2. Discuss and record any disclosures revealed with the individual member and inform them of any action you must take e.g. refer it to Lead Disclosure Signatory (Membership Development Manager)
3. Not unfairly discriminate based on information disclosed
4. Not discuss the matter with other members

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Complaints

Any applicant wishing to raise a complaint should do so, in writing, to the General Secretary within 15 working days, at the latest, of the alleged incident. An investigation will then be conducted by a representative of the Members Safeguarding Review Board or Staffing Committee who has not been previously involved in the selection procedure. The individual will receive written notification as to the outcome.

Further information

www.nacro.org.uk

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about

www.disclosurescotland.co.uk

Or contact Lead Safeguarding Officer, Debs McCahon on 0845 217 8939 or email Deborah.mccahon@woodcraft.org.uk