

NORTH OF TYNE VOLUNTEERING AREA OF EXCELLENCE

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT NATIONAL ID

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is an official agency that runs checks for any criminal convictions or cautions a person may have. It is a legal requirement for VCSE coordinators to run a DBS check for any volunteer who will be supporting children and/or vulnerable adults. It is a crucial element of the duty of care a charity has to run robust safeguarding processes.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE HEALTH CHECK FOR VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

The Health Check for Volunteer-Involving Organisations considers whether you undertake background checks on prospective volunteers depending on the nature of the volunteering role.

The Disclosure and Barring Service defines a volunteer as:

‘A person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travelling and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit some third party other than or in addition to a close relative.’

CARRYING OUT A DBS CHECK

The level of DBS check required depends on what type of activities the volunteer will be undertaking. The first step is to check online (What type of role is it? - Find out which DBS check is right for your employee - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) to discover whether a DBS check is needed for your role, then to find out what level is appropriate. There are three levels of DBS check:

- **Basic:** A basic DBS check will find any cautions or convictions regarded as "unspent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act <https://linkr.it/45wNC9>.
- **Standard:** A standard DBS check will reveal all cautions, warnings and reprimands a person has received, along with any unspent convictions on their record.
- **Enhanced:** An enhanced DBS check will ensure that a potential volunteer is not banned from working with vulnerable adults and children (called by the DBS a "regulated activity" <https://linkr.it/45wNC9>).

A DBS is a legal requirement for volunteers and although the majority will have the necessary ID to initiate a check (<https://linkr.it/3Cziq5>) this may not be the case for a refugee or asylum seeker.

.REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS LOOKING TO VOLUNTEER

Refugees have "leave to remain" and may possess a range of documentation, including a Biometric Residence Permit, but they may not have other documentation listed in the DBS guide.

Asylum seekers have all identity documentation removed on entering the UK and are issued an Application Registration Card (ARC); this counts as official ID but is not accepted as adequate documentation by the DBS. Despite this it is a myth that is impossible for a refugee or asylum seeker to obtain a DBS.

If a volunteer cannot provide Group 1 or 2 documentation, they must go through a process known as the "fingerprint method". This is a long process and involves dealing with the police service; coordinators



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must bear in mind that many refugees/asylum seekers may be escaping oppressive law enforcement in their home countries and be sensitive to their need to feel valued and respected.

THE DBS PROCESS FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT NATIONAL ID

The first step in the process is to complete a DBS check form for the volunteer, answering the question W59 ("Have I seen sufficient documentation?") as "No". This will cause the DBS automatically to return the form (this is an automated process). When the form is returned, it should be sent back again to the DBS; when they receive it for the second time they will process it and begin the fingerprint procedures

It is important that you explain clearly to your potential volunteer what the DBS and the police will require, especially when English is not their first language. The first step in the process is that the DBS will send the volunteer a consent letter to their home address, which has to be signed by the volunteer stating that they are happy for their fingerprints to be taken to prove their identity. The signed letter must be returned along with passport photographs.

The next step is that the DBS will contact a police station in the volunteer's area, providing them with contact details for the volunteer and requesting that they arrange for the volunteer to be fingerprinted. The police will then telephone the volunteer to arrange a mutually convenient time for their fingerprints to be taken (on a mobile phone display the police number will generally be shown as "withheld" or "private number").

The responsibility for following the above process lies with the volunteer, so you must make sure that they understand what is required and how they should respond to the demands of the process. It is good practice for the volunteer organisation to pay for passport photographs for the volunteer and if possible, to provide a buddy/mentor to accompany them when they go to the police station. The attached pictorial guide will help the volunteer to understand the process.

Once the DBS have received the volunteer's fingerprints, they will be able to initiate a check based on the fingerprints given by that person when they entered the UK and supply the volunteer with a DBS disclosure.

