



## PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

### POLICIES, PROCEDURES & SAFER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES SUB GROUP

#### Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Vetting Arrangements and Suitability Assessment Processes When Working with Children and Young People

#### BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND PRINCIPLES

- 1) Agencies / organisations should ideally process and record DBS checks via a dedicated and centralised in-house DBS Processing Team. Where this is not possible an umbrella body from the DBS list of approved registered bodies should be used for this purpose.
- 2) The in-house DBS Processing Team should ideally be part of the Human Resources Department where close working links can be best maintained with the general recruitment process.
- 3) A Single Central Record of all DBS checks within the organisation should be maintained within the Human Resources Department.
- 4) All positive DBS Disclosures (ie those with details of cautions, convictions, warnings, reprimands, barring and supplementary Police intelligence information) should be considered by a minimum of two people prior to confirmation of appointment / engagement.
- 5) No decision around suitability of appointment / engagement should be made until a senior safeguarding officer and / or a senior human resources officer with considerable safeguarding experience, has been consulted.
- 6) Where a positive DBS Disclosure has been received and an appointment / engagement is being considered, the potential employee / volunteer should be interviewed to discuss details contained within the Disclosure where the offences fall within, or could be considered to fall within, one of the following categories: sexual offences, drug related offences, violent offences or criminal damage offences.
- 7) Any interview with a potential employee / volunteer should take place with a panel of no less than two individuals from the agency/organisation. One should be the direct line manager and one, a senior safeguarding officer or a senior human resources officer with considerable safeguarding experience.
- 8) Whilst one single overriding factor may influence the decision to agree suitability for the role, a whole range of factors including: nature of the

offence, nature of the appointment, age of the offence, frequency of the offending, age of the applicant at the time the offence occurred, type of post applied for, remorse shown by the applicant etc, should normally be considered to determine suitability.

**Please note:**

*Nature of the offence*

In general, convictions for sexual, violent or drug offences will be particularly strong contra-indications for work with children.

*Nature of the appointment*

Often the nature of the appointment will help to assess the relevance of the conviction. For example, serious sexual, violent, drug or drink offences would give rise to particular concern where a position was one of providing care. Driving or drink offences would be relevant in situations involving transport of children.

*Age of the offence*

Offences which took place many years in the past may often have less relevance than recent offences. However, convictions for serious violent or sexual offences or serious offences involving substance abuse are more likely to give cause for continuing concern than, for instance, an isolated case of dishonesty committed when the person was young. The potential for rehabilitation must be weighed against the need to protect children.

*Frequency of the offending*

A series of offences over a period of time is more likely to give cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction.

- 9) The final decision on suitability should ideally be taken by an individual(s) who has/have interviewed the applicant and discussed the DBS Disclosure.
- 10) There is no legal requirement to renew a DBS Disclosure unless the category of vulnerable person the individual is working with has changed and only one barring list check was originally requested e.g. previously working with vulnerable adults and a check of the children's barring list was not requested. DBS Disclosures can be renewed at regular intervals in accordance with agency/organisation policy. Where an agency/organisation has made the decision not to renew DBS Disclosures for their staff and volunteers, serious consideration should be given to introducing a control measure such as an annual declaration from staff and volunteers. This should require them to declare if they have committed criminal offences and/or have ongoing Police/court action since the original DBS disclosure was obtained and then for each 12 month period thereafter.

- 11) Employers / engaging organisations should always see the original DBS Disclosure as evidence in determining suitability for the role. A photocopy document should not be accepted.
- 12) If operating a “Portability Process” in accordance with an agreed portability policy i.e. using the DBS Update Service, agencies/organisations should be mindful that offences information such as convictions, cautions, warnings, reprimands etc. are updated on DBS records weekly **but supplementary/local intelligence information is only updated on DBS records every 9 months.**