

The Royal Air Forces Association Volunteer Programme Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Policy for Volunteers

The RAF Association (the Association) acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice which reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and the Association's requirements.

Consideration has been given to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) eligibility guidance, Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) arrangements, Care Quality Commission (CQC) guidance and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. References to DBS checks throughout this policy include PVG (Scotland) and Access NI (Northern Ireland). For the purposes of the following policy, both Branch and Association volunteers will be referred to as 'volunteers'.

Statement of policy

The Association has made an assessment that for some of our volunteering roles a DBS check will need to take place. This is because some of the activities these roles could require volunteers to do are classed as [regulated activity](#).

Eligibility for Checks

The level of check will depend on the role, activities and responsibilities of the volunteer. Not all volunteering roles will require a check. The Association assesses, and keeps under review, the activities performed in different volunteer roles to determine what roles require checks, and at what level.

In 2015 the Association undertook a formal review and risk assessment of welfare volunteering activity and has decided that all welfare volunteers including Honorary Welfare Officers, Branch Caseworkers, Area Caseworkers and Befrienders will undertake an Enhanced DBS check with adults barred check list, on appointment and thereafter every five years. Area Welfare Officers manage and undertake DBS checks for welfare volunteers.

Volunteers working in fundraising, events, supervised Wings Break Hotels, Area administration and other Area support roles are not performing regulated activity and so do not require a DBS check.

Type of DBS Check

There are three types of check:

- **Standard Check**—positions included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. A standard check looks at spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings.
- **Enhanced Check** – positions included in both ROA and the Police Act 1977 (Criminal Records) Regulations. An enhanced check looks at the areas for the standard check plus additional information from the local police.
- **Enhanced Check with children's and/or adults barred list checks** – Eligible for an enhanced check (as above) and those positions specifically listed in the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations. All those providing regulated activity for children and adults, supervising that activity, are required to hold a satisfactory enhanced with barred lists check. An enhanced check looks at the areas for the standard check plus additional information from the local police as well as consideration of the 'Barred Lists'.



Undertaking Checks

The Association uses an online umbrella body, registered with DBS to countersign applications and manage its DBS checking process. Applicants will be identified as being 'Adult Workforce', 'Children Workforce' or 'Adult and Children Workforce'.

Certificates

DBS now sends a certificate only to the applicant. Certificates cannot be photocopied and so it is important that records are kept of:

- The date of issue of the check.
- Full name and date of birth of employee/volunteer.
- Type of check requested (Standard or Enhanced).
- Whether the adults and/or children service list was checked and the outcome.
- The position for which the check was requested.
- The unique reference number of the check.
- Details of the employment/volunteer engagement decision taken.
- Details of date of any periodic checks.

These details are retained in the online umbrella body record to which the Area Welfare Officer, HR and Volunteering Administrator and Director of HR and Volunteering have access. A note of the check is made on the online volunteer record held on the volunteer database.

Update Service – free to volunteers

To make checks more portable there is a DBS Update Service which should reduce the number of applications individuals will have to make. The Update Service, which is free to volunteers, will allow them to apply for a check only once and then if a similar check is required for another position, then, with the volunteer's consent, another organisation would be able to check online to see if the information was still up-to-date. Volunteers can [register online](#) for free as soon as they have their application form reference number or they can wait and [register](#) with their certificate number when they receive their DBS certificate. If so, they must do so within 14 days of the certificate being issued.

Periodic Checks

All those in volunteer roles which require a satisfactory DBS check will have a periodic check every five years.

Volunteer Recruitment Decisions

If a criminal records check discloses a conviction or other relevant information, the Director of Welfare and Policy should be approached by the person carrying out the check to decide whether they are suitable to be appointed as a volunteer. The decision will be at the discretion of the Association and the final decision is to be recorded. The Association will not engage a volunteer whom we know to be barred by the Independent Safeguarding Authority/ Disclosure Barring Service.

Criminal records checks are only one aspect of a recruitment decision. The Association also undertakes interviews and checks references, to determine if people are suitable volunteers for the Association.

Referrals

A referral is information regarding a person working in regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults which notifies DBS of concerns that harm or a risk of harm has occurred to a child or vulnerable adult. Referrals will, in the first instance, be discussed with the Director of Welfare and Policy who will complete the DBS referral form.