

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

4. Volunteers

4.10 Criminal records checks



The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is a government agency and provides a one-stop shop for those seeking access to criminal record checks.

A Disclosure (CRB check) is a process of gathering information about an applicant's possible criminal activity. This includes spent and unspent convictions, cautions and warnings given by the Police. A Disclosure is the certificate containing this information.

The CRB Disclosure service can be accessed by becoming a Registered Body or through the services of an Umbrella Registered Body which acts on behalf of other organisations.

A CRB Disclosure should only be requested in specific circumstances, such as when a volunteer has regular contact with vulnerable individuals as a direct result of their position within the organisation.

There are two levels of Disclosure available :-

Standard – this is no longer available for posts that involve working with children or regular contact with vulnerable adults. It will be available for certain security and gaming posts.

Enhanced – for posts that involve regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults. The scope of the Enhanced Disclosure is broadened to

take regulated activity into account from October 2009. This will provide details of spent and unspent convictions, cautions and warnings. In addition, it may contain information from local police forces which may be relevant to the position.

It is important however to be aware of the increased safeguards being introduced under the ISA Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS). These are introduced from October 2009 when the new barred lists will replace POCA, POVA and List 99 and the scope of the Enhanced Disclosure is broadened to take regulated activity into account.

Additionally, from July 2010 any person wishing to work with vulnerable groups will be able to register on the VBS. This will become a legal requirement from November 2010. However, this Scheme will be phased in over a period of five years so not everyone will have to do this immediately.

ISA VBS will work alongside the current system of CRB checks and an online check will show if the individual is registered on the Scheme. However, organisations may still wish to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure to obtain a full criminal history as this may be important in order to assess the full suitability for a particular position.

Cost of Criminal Record Checks

The CRB levies a charge for paid employees of

- Standard Disclosure £31
- Enhanced Disclosure £36

Volunteers are free of charge.

How to obtain a Criminal Record Check

There are two ways for organisations to apply for checks. An organisation can apply to the CRB to become a Registered Body or it can apply through an Umbrella Registered Body.

Many organisations however, may consider becoming a Registered Body to be inappropriate for them or indeed may not be eligible.

WCVA Criminal Records Unit

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WCVA Criminal Records Unit (CRU) is a CRB Umbrella Registered body providing FREE access to the CRB Disclosure service and ISA Vetting and Barring Scheme for the Voluntary Sector within Wales.

The Unit has been set up to help with the safer recruitment of paid staff and volunteers who are recruited into positions working with children and vulnerable adults. CRU is able to provide blank Disclosure application forms and countersign applications on behalf of any voluntary organisation recruiting for positions based in Wales. It also gives advice and guidance on the necessary procedures that need to be in place to ensure that organisations using criminal records checks are compliant with CRB Code of Practice

The fully bilingual service is FREE of administrative charge to voluntary organisations. The only charges are those levied by the CRB in relation to Disclosure checks for paid employees; volunteer checks are free of CRB charges.

WCVA CRU welcomes enquiries from organisations that would like to know more about criminal records checks or wishing to use the CRU service.

Further information

WCVA CRU

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