

WARWICK VOLUNTEERS

SCREENING POLICY

(This Policy should be read in conjunction with the WV Safeguarding Policy)

Warwick Volunteers has a duty of care to protect its volunteers and the members of the community it works with. All projects within Warwick Volunteers contain elements of risk for volunteers and service users alike. Both groups are potentially vulnerable, therefore, protection needs to be in place to minimise risk and liability. Screening volunteers through criminal records checks is one of the initial ways in which Warwick Volunteers can begin to address issues regarding duty of care and provide a more successful and effective service to the local community. All volunteers will receive appropriate guidance and training on working with their client group, so that they can protect themselves from potential risk/allegations.

Section 1: Seeking Disclosures

- 1.1 Warwick Volunteers requires all volunteers whose volunteering is defined as Regulated Activity to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure with Children's Barred List from the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service). DBS checks which have not been processed by the University of Warwick are not normally accepted.
- 1.2 Disclosures are free for volunteers. The University of Warwick uses the services of GBG to process applications. GBG charge an administration fee for each Disclosure, which is paid for by Warwick Volunteers.
- 1.3 Volunteers will not be allowed to begin volunteering on projects with children or Adults at Risk until Warwick Volunteers have received their Disclosure from GBG, sight of a Certificate of Good Conduct if required (see section 4) and evidence that the volunteers have successfully completed the Safeguarding course provided by the University.
- 1.4 In accordance with University of Warwick safeguarding policy, once volunteers have been DBS checked this will be valid for the duration of their course. This means that, if a student volunteered in the previous academic year, they would not be DBS checked again at the start of the current academic year, providing there has been no break in their registered student status with the University during that time.
- 1.5 All volunteers applying for a new Disclosure will be asked to sign up for the DBS Update Service.
- 1.6 If volunteers register for the DBS Update Service, Warwick Volunteers will check volunteers against the Update Service only if there was a gap in their studies or any other reason we thought there had been a change in their DBS record.
- 1.7 Some projects may require further screening and selection processes to help ensure that volunteers are given suitable placements. These might include a DBS check every year, application forms, short interviews, seeking further references or consulting with a safeguarding professional on the suitability of a volunteer to undertake the placement.
- 1.8 The GBG database will show when a volunteer's check is complete. If the database shows that there is content on the volunteer's certificate, the Warwick Volunteers Manager will contact the student, and follow the steps laid out in Section 3.

Section 2: Storage of Information:

- 2.1 Paper copies of Disclosures, containing all details of a volunteer's record, are sent only to the volunteer.

- 2.2 Photocopies of documents provided as identification for a DBS check are stored securely for a maximum period of 12 months and are then confidentially destroyed.
- 2.3 If the Disclosure shows a previous conviction, documents considered by the Disclosure Panel and the determination made by Designated Person for Child Safeguarding for the University will be retained on a file with restricted access. (see Section 3.1)
- 2.4 The Certificate of Good Conduct is checked and a record is made on the database, a copy is not retained.
- 2.5 Every volunteer has the right to see the information stored about them.

Section 3: Making Decisions Regarding Sensitive Information:

- 3.1 Should a volunteer's Disclosure reveal a previous conviction, warning or other information, this does not necessarily mean that a student will not be able to volunteer with children or Adults at Risk. A decision will be taken by the organisation for whom the student wishes to volunteer based on their safeguarding policy in conjunction with the Designated Person for Child Safeguarding for the University. The student may contact the Warwick Volunteers Manager if they would like further advice.
- 3.2 If a decision is made that a volunteer cannot participate in a particular project, Warwick Volunteers will endeavour to find another appropriate project for the volunteer.

Section 4: Certificates of Good Conduct (Overseas criminal records check):

- 4.1 Warwick Volunteers recognises the limitations of seeking Disclosures for volunteers who have not been resident in the UK during the previous five years. In line with best practice guidance, the University of Warwick requires all volunteers who apply for a Disclosure and have been resident in a country outside the UK for a continuous period of 6 months or more in the previous 5 years, to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct from the country(ies) in which they have lived.
- 4.2 Warwick Volunteers recognises that it is not possible to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct from all countries, and that significant costs can be involved where they are available. In order to minimise barriers to volunteering, Warwick Volunteers will inform potential volunteers as early as possible of this requirement and where possible in pre-arrival information issued by the University. Warwick Volunteers will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred by volunteers when obtaining a Certificate of Good Conduct. Where all practicable routes to obtaining such documentation have been exhausted WV may, on behalf of a student volunteer, apply to the senior administrator for Safeguarding of the university for written dispensation.

Section 5: Checks against University records:

The membership list for Warwick Volunteers will be checked against the University's record of students involved in a Disciplinary investigation on a weekly basis. The check is conducted by the University's Safeguarding department and if a volunteer is identified in the check, the University's senior administrator for Safeguarding will advise the Warwick Volunteers Manager and a decision will be taken on whether the student identified may volunteer through Warwick Volunteers.

Section 6: Sharing information

- 6.1 When the selection and screening process has been completed, Warwick Volunteers will contact the community partner/school and provide them with the name(s) and contact email of the students who will be volunteering on the project. The email will be sent from volunteers@warwick.ac.uk prior to the placement commencing.
- 6.2 The volunteer will consent to take their DBS Certificate and Certificate of Good Conduct (if applicable) and photo ID with them the first time they volunteer at a location as they may be asked to provide these documents by the organisation.