



Quality Controlled Document

POL-12

**Policy:** Disclosure and Barring Service Policy (DBS)

**Date:** February 2019

**Approved by:** Director of HR

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## 1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all Gloucestershire College employees/potential employees, students and volunteers who within the requirements of the associated legislation, are obliged to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and/or barred list check and who are found to have a criminal conviction or are on the Disclosure and Barring Service barred list.
- 1.2 This policy also applies to all subsidiary companies of Gloucestershire College namely, Gloucestershire Facilities Management (GFM) and Gloucestershire Professional Services (GPS).
- 1.3 Gloucestershire College and its subsidiary companies, are dedicated to safeguarding and providing a safe working culture and this policy is in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and DBS guidance.
- 1.4 The legislation relating to DBS checks set out the eligibility requirements for DBS checks, rather than making them a requirement. It is for the College, as the employer, to decide when and whether to undertake a DBS check, by considering the nature of the activities undertaken by its employees and whether they fall within the eligibility criteria. The College would therefore need to consider whether each employee falls within the scope of the eligibility criteria before carrying out a DBS check.

## 2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 The College has a duty to provide a secure and safe environment in which all learners and staff can obtain the best possible benefit from studying or working in the College. Part of the College's duty is to ensure that it does not employ or make use of the service of a person who has a criminal conviction or record

of behaviour that could pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of learners and staff.

- 2.2 This policy will outline the process for ensuring that approved checks are made on College employees and those carrying out services for the College as required.
- 2.3 There is also a duty on the College to ensure that learners in work placements who come into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults are safe to do so. This policy will outline the process for ensuring those learners, on identified courses, are checked in an appropriate manner.
- 2.4 This policy aims to provide guidance on the employment of ex-offenders. It focuses on the requirements of the legislation, in particular the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA), the Police Act 1997, the Protection of Children Act 1999, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006), as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012), Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007), the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Equality Act (2010).
- 2.5 The ethos of the policy is that recruiters must adopt an open mind and make objective assessments based on merit and ability to do the job and where appropriate a full assessment of the risks involved.
- 2.6 This policy is a requirement of the Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice.
- 2.7 The College engages with eSafeguarding, an online DBS checking service, to undertake all criminal checks. eSafeguarding is an umbrella body for the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

- 3.1 Gloucestershire College aims to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications from diverse candidates. Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant. Having an 'unspent' conviction will not necessarily bar candidates from employment or study. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the candidate's /student's offence(s).
- 3.2 Recruitment and selection decisions will be based on the following criteria:
  - (i) The applicants/students attitude, abilities, skills, experience and qualifications as measured against the person specification/entry criteria.
  - (ii) The nature of the conviction and its relevance to the job/course in question.
  - (iii) Potential risks to students and the public, other members of staff/students and the service being provided.

- (iv) Risk to the College's reputation, leading to a potential loss of confidence by members of the public.

#### 4. Assessing DBS Checks

4.1 In respect of assessing DBS checks and the Barred List, Gloucestershire College will:

4.1.1 Ensure that requesting and handling of DBS checks is always dealt with confidentially and with discretion.

4.1.2 In relation to employees, only request a disclosure / Barred List check in cases where an assessment has indicated that one is relevant to the position concerned.

4.1.3 Ensure that assessments of posts/work related activity focus on:

- The guidance provided regarding regulated activity relating to children and vulnerable adults.
- The nature of the job; the workplace environment; exposure to money; exposure to property; contact with children (meaning a person under the age of 18 years), young people and vulnerable adults.
- The extent of job supervision (undertaken by a person who works in regulated activity and who also has a current DBS check).
- Frequency of contact (once a week or more) or intensity (four times a month or overnight).

4.1.4 When a new post is created, it is the responsibility of the Hiring Manager, with support from the HR team, to ensure that an appropriate risk assessment of the post / work related activity has been undertaken to identify the level of check that is required.

4.1.5 The College uses the following tool to determine if a DBS check is appropriate and the level of check required: <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check> The College ensures that this test is considered when recruiting at all levels and considers the following:

- What type of role is it?
- What does the role involve?
- Where is the role performed?
- How often is it performed?

4.1.6 In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, the College encourages applicant honesty by stating and ensuring that applicants are considered on merit and ability, in addition to factors such as previous criminal convictions.

4.1.7 The recruitment process includes requests for spent conviction records unless the job is exempt under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Where an applicant does have a spent conviction, they are asked to submit confidential records separately from the usual application form, and to the Director of HR, in an envelope marked 'private and confidential'.

- 4.1.8 All applicants are required to comply with Data Protection and Human Rights legislation.
- 4.1.9 The College's ensures access to DBS information is given on a need-to-know basis only.
- 4.1.10 In relation to students, the College requests a disclosure/Barred List Check if programme requirements indicate this is necessary.
- 4.1.11 The following levels of checks may be carried out by the College dependent on role:

- Standard Check

Details of an individual's convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings on Police central records and includes both 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions.

- Enhanced

The same details as a Standard check, together with any information held locally by Police forces that it is reasonably considered might be relevant in the post applied for.

- Enhanced with a DBS Barred List Check

Child, Adult and Child and Adult barred list information is only available for those individuals engaged in regulated activity with children and adults and a small number of posts as listed in the Police Act Regulations.

DBS Adult First- an individual can be checked against the DBS Adult barred list while waiting for the full criminal record check to be completed.

## 5. Requirements for Employees

- 5.1 Gloucestershire College has identified posts which require a disclosure and are identified as undertaking regulated activity and the level of check that is required. This applies to all employees, volunteers and agency staff.
- 5.2 The College uses the following tool to determine if a DBS check is appropriate and the level of check required: <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check> which considers the following:
- What type of role is it?
  - What does the role involve?
  - Where is the role performed?
  - How often is it performed?
- 5.3 When considering the relevance of a criminal record or placement on the Barred List, a decision on employment will be based on:
- Any potential risk to students and others

- The seriousness of an offence(s)
  - An examination of circumstances leading up to an offence
  - Repeat offences
  - The length of time since an offence(s) took place
  - An individual's attempt to rehabilitate themselves
  - The ability to manage risks and provide safeguards
  - The level of supervision required and available
  - The country in which an offence was committed
- 5.4 If a person will not provide their authorisation for a Disclosure to be carried out when it is essential for the post, then any conditional offer of employment will be withdrawn.
- 5.5 Current employees must notify the Director of HR if they receive a caution, a conviction and/or are placed on the Barred List. Any decisions regarding their employment status will be made under the principles of this policy.
- 5.6 Final decisions on whether or not a conviction is a barrier to employment will be made by the Director of HR, who may involve the Principal in this decision as necessary.

## **6. Requirements for Students**

- 6.1 Early Years students at Levels 2 and 3 and Foundation Degree need to undergo DBS checking as a requirement of their training placements. Health and Social Care students at Levels 2 and 3 are also required to do this for the work based learning element of their courses.
- 6.2 PGCE students who are undertaking their learning through the University will require DBS checking to be undertaken by the University. It is the responsibility of the Head of HE to ensure that the College has had sight of the original certificate and a record of the certificate reference number is retained in the student's records.
- 6.3 PGCE Students who are undertaking their learning through Gloucestershire College require DBS checking to be undertaken by the College. It is the responsibility of the Head of HE to ensure that the College has had sight of the original certificate and a record of the certificate reference number is retained in the student's records.
- 6.4 If a student is to undertake paid work for the College, the full recruitment process will need to be adopted prior to any work being undertaken. It is the responsibility of the Hiring Manager to ensure that the correct paperwork is passed to the HR department for processing. The student will then be considered an employee of the College.

## **7. Requirements for Host Families**

- 7.1 Under English law, where a College selects people for students to stay with, and they are paid to take care of the students, then all members of the

family aged 18 years and over must be vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Agency.

- 7.2 When a host family member is also an employee of the College, a new DBS check will need to be undertaken, even if a DBS check has already been undertaken by the College as a requirement for their current role.

## **8. Requirements for Agency Staff**

- 8.1 Where it is necessary to engage agency staff at the College, it is a requirement of the recruitment agency to undertake a DBS check, dependent on the College's risk assessment and requirement.
- 8.2 It is College policy that the agency check must have been undertaken within the previous 3 months and employment references have been requested and received for the agency member of staff prior to placement at the College.
- 8.3 Should a Recruitment Agency not comply with the College's request, the placement will not be authorised and the agency member of staff will not be engaged to work at the College.

## **9. Risk Assessments**

- 9.1 When a new post is created, it is the responsibility of the hiring manager to ensure that an appropriate risk assessment of the post / work related activity has been undertaken to identify the level of check that is required.
- 9.2 Where a DBS application is in progress with eSafeguarding and the College is awaiting receipt of the check, a risk assessment can be completed to bridge the gap.
- 9.3 A risk assessment may only be considered if all other pre-screening processes are satisfactory and complete including, employment references.
- 9.4 The risk assessment does not substitute the on going, day-to-day safeguarding of students. New staff must be supervised and should be observed and supported to ensure they understand, know where to find and become familiar with and adhere to, the College policies, procedures and rules etc.
- 9.5 When completing a risk assessment, the hiring manager will be asked to confirm the following measures:
- **If the person will be left unsupervised on occasions, please provide additional details of this here:** *(Consider their role, how they are expected to work and take into account whether within term time or leave periods)*
  - **Please describe the environment that the new person will be working within e.g. are they working in an open plan area and are visible to other staff and or within a closed restricted area.** *(Please provide as much detail*

*as possible i.e. Open plan workshop, office environment, visibility within the room the session will be in)*

- **Please provide details of safeguarding measures that will be implemented to manage the potential risk identified** (e.g. restricted duties, working with other staff at all times, induction, training, access to personal data (staff and Learners), access to commercially sensitive data etc.).
- **Please provide details of the supervision that will be provided for the staff member prior to the DBS (CRB) Disclosure being received:- In considering the appropriate support to implement you will need to take into account the following:**
  - a) Lecturer without previous teaching experience or who has had a period of 3 months or longer gap from teaching, must not teach /be in a classroom without supervision;*
  - b) Lecturers with 3 months or more continuous teaching experience may require a lower level of supervision.*
- *In each situation please demonstrate the level and frequency of supervision and monitoring controls pending receipt of a DBS disclosure.*

9.6 All risk assessments are authorised by either the Head of HR Operations or the Director of HR following a full review of pre-screening checks.

## **10. Provision of Information for Employees**

- 10.1 All applicants and employees involved in the recruitment process will be given the opportunity to request a copy of this policy.
- 10.2 All job descriptions/person specifications for positions where Disclosures are requested, will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of a successful application, to ensure applicants are aware of the situation.
- 10.3 A copy of the DBS Code of Practice will also be provided on request.
- 10.4 Application forms and accompanying material will contain a statement to the effect that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position, in order to reassure applicants that Disclosure information will not be used unfairly.
- 10.5 A submission will only to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Agency once an applicant has been provided with a conditional offer of employment or is to undertake voluntary work.
- 10.6 Disclosure information and a barred list check will be taken up in regards to current employees in the event that the nature of their employment changes in such a way as to make a Disclosure or barred list check necessary e.g. now have access to children, young people or vulnerable adults when they previously did not or where advice is given by a Government or other Statutory Agency.

## **11. Handling, Use, Storage, Retention and Disposal of Information**

- 11.1 An opportunity will be provided to all applicants to discuss any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position.
- 11.2 The Director of HR or a nominated member of the HR Management team will discuss any matters revealed in Disclosure information, with the applicant, before deciding whether to withdraw an offer of employment.
- 11.3 Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought may lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- 11.4 Recipients of Disclosure information (counter signatories) will ensure that Disclosure information is not passed to persons not authorised to receive it under section 124 of the Police Act (1997).
- 11.5 Disclosure information will only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.
- 11.6 Upon receipt of the Disclosure Certificate, the applicant must produce the original certificate to the HR Department, within 5 working days of receipt. The applicant will be asked to sign to give their consent to allow the College to retain a partial copy of the Disclosure Certificate on file. Failure to produce the original certificate to the HR Department within 5 working days of receipt may result in any provisional offer of employment being withdrawn.
- 11.7 Disclosure information will be kept on the applicant's electronic file on a secure network. Access will be strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. HR will keep a record of all Disclosures received. Gloucestershire College recognises that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.
- 11.8 DBS application information may be retained for a period of up to six months after the date on which the recruitment decision is taken, after which time it will be destroyed. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will be enforced.

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