

Petersfield Voluntary Care Group Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure

Introduction

The trustees of Petersfield Voluntary Care Group (PVCG) are fully committed to the recruitment and support of volunteers within our organisation. We recognise the importance of recruiting volunteers safely and who have valued skills, experience and knowledge.

The Petersfield Voluntary Care Group (PVCG) Group Safer Recruiting policy and procedure demonstrates its commitment to keeping safe the people at risk of abuse and neglect (over 18) with whom it works alongside. The Group acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. The Group understands that it is important to have the policy and procedures in place so that volunteer Group members can work to prevent abuse and know what to do in the event of abuse. The Group acknowledges that significant numbers of people at risk are abused and it is important that the Group has a Safer Recruitment policy, a set of procedures to follow and puts in place preventative measures to try and reduce those numbers.

As a Group using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the Group comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly. All application forms, adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered a role that requires one.

Our Commitment

Before recruiting volunteers, we will ensure that:

- The committee understands why we are recruiting a volunteer.
- The committee understand the levels of support we offer to individual volunteers.
- There is work for the volunteer to do.
- This work will contribute clear value to our organisation and the volunteer.
- There will be both an adequate selection and support system for the volunteer in place.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to recruiting volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds and will advertise our volunteering needs in a cross-section of the media to reach and reflect the diversity of the community we serve. We will ensure that promotion of our volunteering needs takes place in all local centres including those run by and/or used by minority groups within our local neighbourhoods.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy can be made available and applies to volunteers.

Procedure

The Group will follow safer recruitment procedures to ensure the protection of people at risk from harm and abuse. These include

- Application form to include 2 x references request
- Confidential Declaration form (full/measured discussion on possible DBS blemishes)
- Identity check
- DBS check completed by applicant if appropriate for role
- DBS checked by Group Safeguarding Rep/DBS Checker
- Any blemished DBS discussed with GNN (see principles below)
- If blemished DBS/disclosure Blemished Record procedure followed (see procedure below)
- Volunteers receive induction including GNN policies/safeguarding training
- Volunteers monitored/supported throughout their time with the Group

DBS eligibility

The Group will complete DBS checks on the appropriate volunteer roles. Any volunteer who carries out a 'regulated activity' with adults will be eligible for an enhanced check with a check of the children's and/or adults' barred list i.e. driving/accompanying a client to a health appointment, shopping for a vulnerable adult where cash is handled.

Blemished Record - Principles

The Group understands that it should provide applicants with an opportunity to declare relevant information by asking them to complete an Application form alongside a Confidential Declaration form when they apply for a voluntary position that involves contact with adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. The Group recognises that the process should include

- Application Form asking for two references
- Role Description
- Completion of a Confidential Declaration form
- DBS check completed if the role is eligible

The Group understands that at interview/in a separate discussion, it is important to ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the role. The Group understands that failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the role sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of being a volunteer for the Group.

The Group understands that all appointment decisions should be based upon a fair and objective judgement as to the individual's suitability for the role. If an individual makes a disclosure about a previous conviction, offence, charge or where a blemished disclosure is received, the Group understands that it will liaise with the Good Neighbours Network to consider the specific offence(s) or conviction(s) in relation to the particular role/situation.

The Group recognises that responsibility for the appointment of volunteers rests with the Group based on the practice for the particular role. The decision taken must be authorised

by the Group Chair or Group Trustees.

The Group recognises that having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a volunteer from joining the Group and that any decision made will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

However, the Group also recognises that there are offences or issues of concern that will disqualify an individual from being appointed to positions of trust and having contact with adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. This would include people convicted of violent or sexual offences against children or adults including domestic violence, and in some cases individuals who have been convicted or charged with burglary, theft, deception and/or fraud or in the case of volunteer drivers, dangerous driving convictions. Disclosures discussed or discovered during the application stage will be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account the offence, history involved and role applied for.

Blemished Record - Procedure

The Group understands that on receipt of a blemished disclosure, an initial evaluation of the information should be made with the Good Neighbours Network. The Group will ensure the completion of a written record of the discussion with the applicant. In addition, an appropriate risk assessment such as the one in the Appendix below should be completed demonstrating the decision making process. This risk assessment should demonstrate that it is

- Safe and appropriate to appoint
- Unsafe to appoint
- If unsafe, the applicant will be informed and details of the appeal procedure provided

Appeals and complaints procedure

The Group understands that If an applicant for a disclosure is unhappy about the way the Group has processed the disclosure the complaint should be made in writing, stating their name, address, the nature of the complaint, the date of the disclosure document concerned, the identity of the person or Group responsible for offering the voluntary role and any other relevant information to the Group address.

The Group will ensure that complaint is dealt with within six weeks.

The Group Chair will instigate an independent assessment of the issues in question and the adjudication will be sent to the complainant.

Policy adopted on (date).....14 January 2026.....

Name Mary H Fair.....

Signed Mary H Fair.....

Date for review.....January 2027.....

Blemished Record Sample Risk Assessment

Name of applicant	Role applied for:
Name of Group	DBS Number:
For safer recruitment practice the process includes role description, references and Application form with Confidential Declaration form	Role description: Y/N References: Y/N Confidential Declaration form Y/N
Did the applicant disclose the blemished record during the recruitment process?	Y/N Details
Details/circumstances of offence on disclosure certificate	
What contact with adults does the role involve?	
What level of supervision and support will be available for the role holder?	
Does the role involve any responsibility for finance or items of value? If yes, what processes do you have in place.	Y/N Details
Will the nature of the role present any opportunities to re-offend? What are the risks?	
Is there a need for additional action or information?	
Decision taken-safe or unsafe to appoint, with appeal procedure notification.	
Authorised by (Chairman /Trustee)	Name Signature Date