Safer Recruitment Processes

Safer recruitment and DBS checks are essential processes to help protect vulnerable individuals by ensuring that those employed to work with them are safe and suitable for the role. These measures help prevent unsuitable applicants with a history of harm or abuse from gaining access to vulnerable populations.

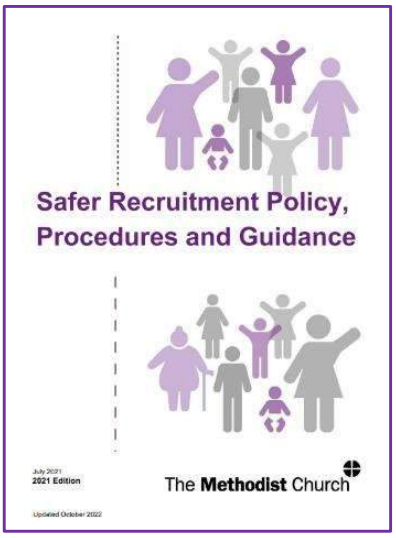
All churches, circuits and districts are required to demonstrate a commitment to implementing safe recruitment practices, remembering that a person's past behaviour is the most reliable way of predicting future behaviour.

Policy

Ensure you follow *Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance* -

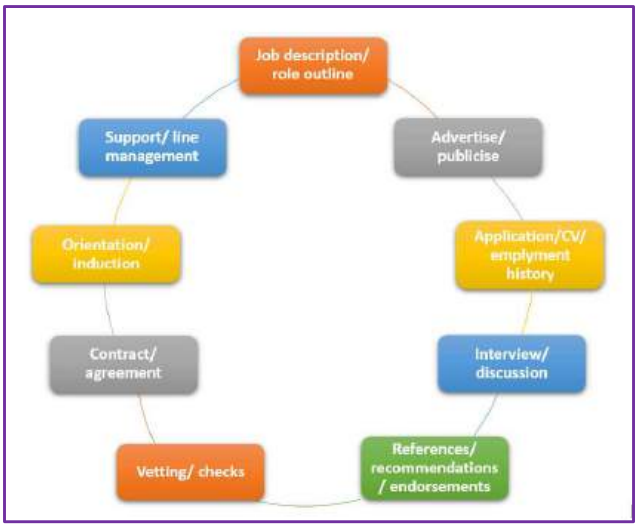
Safeguarding policies and guidance - The Methodist Church

This document replaces the former *Practice Guidance on Carrying out Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Checks as part of Safer Recruitment (January 2018)* and was amended in 2022 to include updated portability guidance.



For further guidance

Follow the principles within *Twelve steps to safer recruitment* – **see p10**
and the safer recruitment cycle below



Lay Employment

Details regarding lay employment can be found at

Lay Employment Resource (methodist.org.uk)

Remember that every district should have access to a District Lay Employment Advisor whose role, as set out in CPD 438A (5) is to:

- provide advice to circuit and church representatives.
- oversee employment arrangements within the district.
- check contractual documents prior to issue.
- receive information from the Connexional HR Team when appropriate.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps churches, circuits and districts make safer recruitment decisions by providing information about an individual's criminal history to reduce the risk that unsuitable people are able to work with vulnerable groups.

There are four types of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check:

Basic	disclosures show details of unspent convictions and conditional cautions. It is typically used for roles that involve limited contact with vulnerable individuals.
Standard	disclosures show details of spent convictions, unspent convictions and cautions that have not been filtered. It is often required for roles involving regular contact with vulnerable individuals.
Enhanced	disclosures provide the same information as a Standard DBS check but also includes additional relevant information held by the police. It is typically required for roles that involve substantial unsupervised contact with vulnerable individuals.
Enhanced disclosures with barred lists checks	provide the same information as an enhanced disclosure together with information as to whether the individual is barred from engaging in 'regulated activity' with children and/or vulnerable adults.

For further information that may be disclosed on the different DBS checks, **see p12**

Remember:

- not every role requires a DBS check, so we need be careful not to 'overcheck' volunteers. We tend to assume that all church roles need a DBS check, but this isn't the case.
- that we may need to differentiate between those activities coordinated by and in the name of the church, which may need a DBS check, and those where people within the church make their own arrangements to support friends, where there is no requirement for a DBS.
- that DBS checks must be conducted in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements, including consideration of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, which governs the disclosure of criminal records.
- that it is an offence to request or apply for an Enhanced DBS Check with Barred List if the role does not require it – i.e. it is not defined to be a regulated activity.

Registered Body for DBS checks

- Due Diligence Checking Ltd (DDC) are the Registered Body that processes all DBS / PVG applications for the Methodist Church and DBS checks should be renewed every five years.
- All DBS applications will be done electronically.
- Lay verifiers are added onto the system by the ministers who wish them to verify on their behalf.
- Any new verifiers will need to provide an email address that is for their own individual use only, due to the sensitivity and confidential nature of the information being received and to have received a privacy notice:

  Safeguarding DBS Verifier Privacy Notice

- The different levels of access that can be requested and granted are:

Verifier/document checker	access allows a user to check documents and gives the option to allow them to request applications as well.
Manager	access allows a user to request applications, manage applications, check documents, add document checkers to the account and be notified when disclosures are issued.
Superuser	is just someone with access to more than one account, so this can be for any level of access.

- Online applications are free of charge for volunteers but must be paid for for those workers who are employed.
- Churches and circuits are responsible for all local DBS checks, including those for ministers, including supernumerary ministers. These are undertaken at District level, and Superintendent undertake those for their ministers/supernumeraries and the Chair/Deputy District Chair will undertake those of the Superintendents.
- Disclosure certificates are only issued to applicants, which means that what where a blemish is reported the Registered Body is made aware of, but not the nature of, the blemish.
- There is a process that is followed regarding blemished DBS, see – *Safer Recruitment, Policy, Procedure and Guidance: 3.3.2 Restrictions to Appointment for Roles Requiring a Criminal Record Check.*
- However, if you become aware of such a blemish, please contact the ROS as soon as possible so that the process can be initiated more quickly.

Who needs what level of DBS?

- See the list of roles for DBS agreed with DDC on pages 18-19.

Methodist-Quick-Start-Guide-Online-Checks.pdf

- Although not exhaustive it is a good basis from which to make your considerations. The key thing is not so much the title of the role, but what it entails, i.e. the amount of time spent with a child, young person or adult who may be vulnerable and what is being done.
- The main consideration will be whether someone is undertaking regulated activity when working with children or young people or helping and caring for vulnerable adults.
- A DBS regulated activity is a job role that involves specific work with children or young people in an unsupervised capacity frequently i.e. more than three times in 30 days. For adults, the activity only needs to be undertaken once to be defined as regulated.
- All applicants for regulated activity roles will need an Enhanced DBS check with a barred list check done to verify that they are suitable.
- Others working within the activity whose contact is less frequent or is supervised at all times by someone at the above level will still require an Enhanced DBS Check but without a barred list check.
- Anyone acting in a supervisory or lead role is considered to be involved in a regulated activity and will need an Enhanced DBS check and barred list check.
- Once you have made this decision, make the most appropriate selection from the above list.

For further information see:

Is this Regulated Activity with Children?	**p13**
A flowchart to aid decision making	**p14**
DBS frequently asked questions	**p15**
Handout For Applicants Using the Online Process	**p16**

Acceptable routes for verification of documents

Route 1	Route 2	Route 3
1 -3 from Group 1 **Rest from Group 2a or 2b** *(3 in total)*	can only be used if it's impossible to process the application through Route 1 **1 -3 from Group 2a** **Rest from Group 2b** *(3 in total)*	can only be used if it's impossible to process the application through Routes 1 or 2. *If the applicant can't provide these documents they may need to be fingerprinted.*
		a birth certificate issued after the time of birth (*UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands*) **1 -4 from Group 2a** **Rest from 2b** *(4 in total)*
At least one of the documents must show the applicant's current address.		
If the applicant **isn't** a UK national and is applying for voluntary work, they may need to be fingerprinted if they cannot show these documents.	If the applicant **isn't** a UK national and is applying for voluntary work they can't use Route 2.	If the applicant can't provide these documents they may need to be fingerprinted.
	The organisation conducting their ID check must then also use an appropriate external ID validation service to check the application.	

For further information see:

[ID checking guidelines for Standard/Enhanced DBS check applications from 22 April 2025 - GOV.UK]

Other DBS services

- The DBS Update Service makes disclosures portable between different organisations. This means that individuals can keep their DBS certificate up-to-date and take it with them when they move to a new job or role where the same level and type of check is required.
- The DBS Regional Outreach service focuses on working more closely with organisations to build and develop relationships, and to act as a single point of contact for all DBS-related enquiries within their region.

Filtering

- Filtering is a process that removes any protected cautions or convictions from a DBS check and the **DBS filtering guidance** gives further information.
- **Certain offences** will always be disclosed on a Standard or Enhanced DBS certificate (*unless they relate to a youth caution*) and are usually of a serious violent or sexual nature or are relevant for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- All convictions resulting in a custodial sentence, whether or not suspended, will always be disclosed.
- Youth cautions, warnings and reprimands will not be disclosed automatically.
- Updates to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act in November 2023 (*England and Wales only*) led to amendment of the filtering rules affecting what is disclosed on basic, standard and enhanced checks.
- This means that unspent convictions and cautions will now appear on checks even if they have previously been filtered off. Therefore, in some limited circumstances, a standard or enhanced check may now show more information than before.
- The recommendation is that the employer should consider this information when making a suitability decision.

For further information see:

1174285_updates-to-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act.pdf (emlfiles4.com)

Filtering rules for DBS certificates

Exemptions

- All ministers and local preachers are required to have an appropriate DBS check, provided that they are capable of preaching or carrying out pastoral ministry. A local definition can be found within the District Safeguarding Policy.
- Where a minister or local preacher is no longer able to carry out such ministry, they may apply for an exemption by completing the appropriate exemption form.

- Completing this form also exempts the minister/local preacher from the requirement to attend further safeguarding training for the period this exemption applies.

DBS Exemption forms for ministers and local preachers

However, you need not worry about this as it will be for the Superintendent, District Chair and ROS to manage.

Further Useful Guidance

DDC quick start guide including introductory information about the online DBS checking process.	Methodist-Quick-Start-Guide-Online-Checks.pdf
This leaflet explains eligibility for DBS checks within various faith groups. This guidance applies whether the individuals are paid or unpaid.	DBS checks for working with children in places of worship - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
A guide to adult workforce roles for registered bodies and employers	Adult Workforce Guide
A guide to child workforce roles for registered bodies and employers	Child workforce guide
Statutory guidance: Regulated Activity (children) - supervision of activity with children which is regulated activity when unsupervised.	Statutory guidance: Regulated Activity (children) DfE
Regulated activity with children in England	Regulated activity with children in England and Wales - GOV.UK
Regulated activity with adults in England	Regulated activity with adults in England and Wales - GOV.UK
Barring referrals: Your guide to how and when to make one	Barring referrals: Your guide to how and when to make one
The Independent Review of the Disclosure and Barring Regime *Feb 2023*	Independent Review of the Disclosure and Barring Regime - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
DBS presentation by DDC to our districts *(202)*	DBS Presentation (2).mp4

Application forms for volunteers

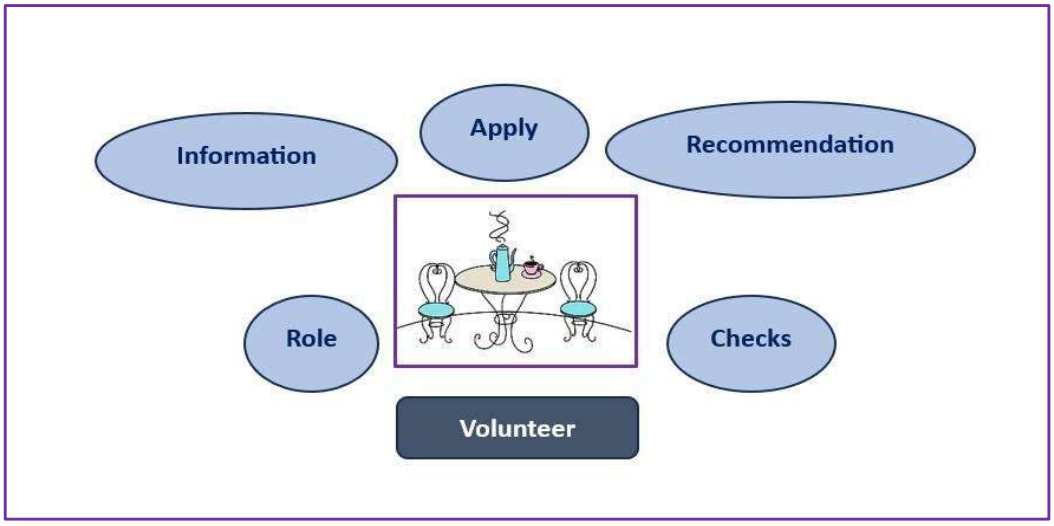
- As of December 2023, a single, more streamlined Volunteer Application form has been made available on the Safer Recruitment page of the Methodist Church website.

Volunteer Application form (methodist.org.uk)

- This single form now incorporates the Safeguarding Declaration and Privacy Notice within it and must now be completed by all prospective volunteers, whether or not the role they are applying for meets the criteria for an Enhanced DBS certificate.
- Please note that this form now replaces Form A Part 1 & 2 and other Confidential Declaration forms you may have been using.
- The single exception to this is the Trustee Eligibility Declaration **Trustee Declaration and Eligibility form 2 Jan 2026**
- Information that will be required to complete the online application and the documents that can be used for verification can be found on p17.

Completing the Form

Remember – The majority of the form can be completed at once, over a chat and a cuppa!



References/recommendations

References/recommendations for volunteers are just confirmation from someone who knows the individual and can state they are of good character and believe they and the role will be a good fit.

So, some volunteers may already have these on email which they can use, some people may offer the name of someone you know and can speak or have already spoken to, or you may need to contact them.

In that case it would be something as simple as, for example,

….. has approached the church to offer to volunteer in the role of …. and has offered your name as someone who would be able to support this.

Please can you confirm that you know ……, believe them to be in good standing and are likely to be able to serve the church well in the role.

Twelve steps to safer recruitment

Step	For paid roles	For volunteer roles
1	Before you begin, ensure that you have access to an up-to-date safer recruitment policy that describes the process.	
2	Ensure you have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and includes a commitment to safer recruitment.	
3	Check and update job description and person specification for the role(s).	Check and update role outline
	Consider whether the activities specified may require a criminal record check.	
4	Ensure that you have an appropriate advertisement prepared that contains all necessary information about the role, a timetable for recruitment and your commitment to safeguarding.	Advertisement could be verbal or in church notices
5	Ensure that you have put together a suitable candidate information pack containing all the required information about the organisation, role, recruitment timetable, safeguarding policy/statement, application form and confidential declaration.	
6	Scrutinise each application carefully and fairly with reference to the criteria for the role before carrying out interviews or discussions with candidates.	The application form, with confidential declaration, can be found at: Volunteer Application form (methodist.org.uk)
7	Carry out appropriate checks for your shortlisted candidates, including references.	References may consist of a note of recommendation e.g. from

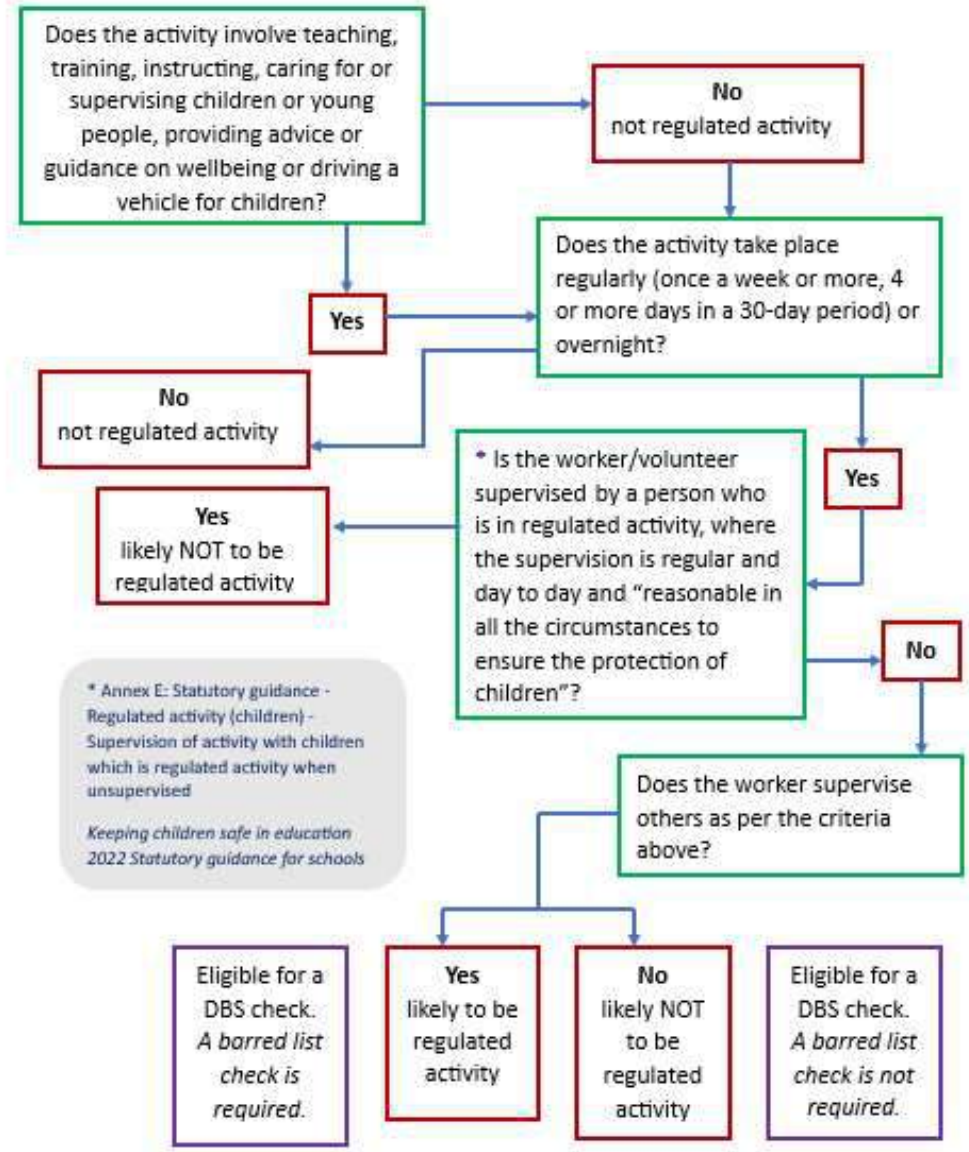
	Confirm identity and relevant certificates of qualifications/course attendance, as appropriate. *NB this may be carried out at the point of interview.*	Minister/ Superintendent stating how/why they believe the individual meets the requirements of the role.
8	If there are several candidates, ensure all shortlisted candidates receive the same letter of invitation to interview, supplying them with all necessary information.	Where there is more than one volunteer applicant ensure each is treated in the same way
9	Conduct a face-to-face interview or discussion for ALL shortlisted candidates based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification and job/role description.	Interview could consist of a brief chat to ensure the individual is clear what the role does, and does not, entail
10	Ensure that all specific questions designed to gain required information about each candidate's suitability have been asked, including those needed to address any gaps in information supplied on the application form.	
11	Make selection of a preferred candidate based upon their suitability for the role.	
12	Ensure that your preferred candidate is informed in writing that the offer of employment (including volunteer positions) is conditional on receiving satisfactory information from all necessary checks.	Ensure the volunteer is supported to obtain a DBS and access to safeguarding training as the role requires.

Finally: ensure that all staff and volunteers know who their line manager is and receives regular sessions to ensure their own wellbeing and that there is no evidence of possible boundary drift.

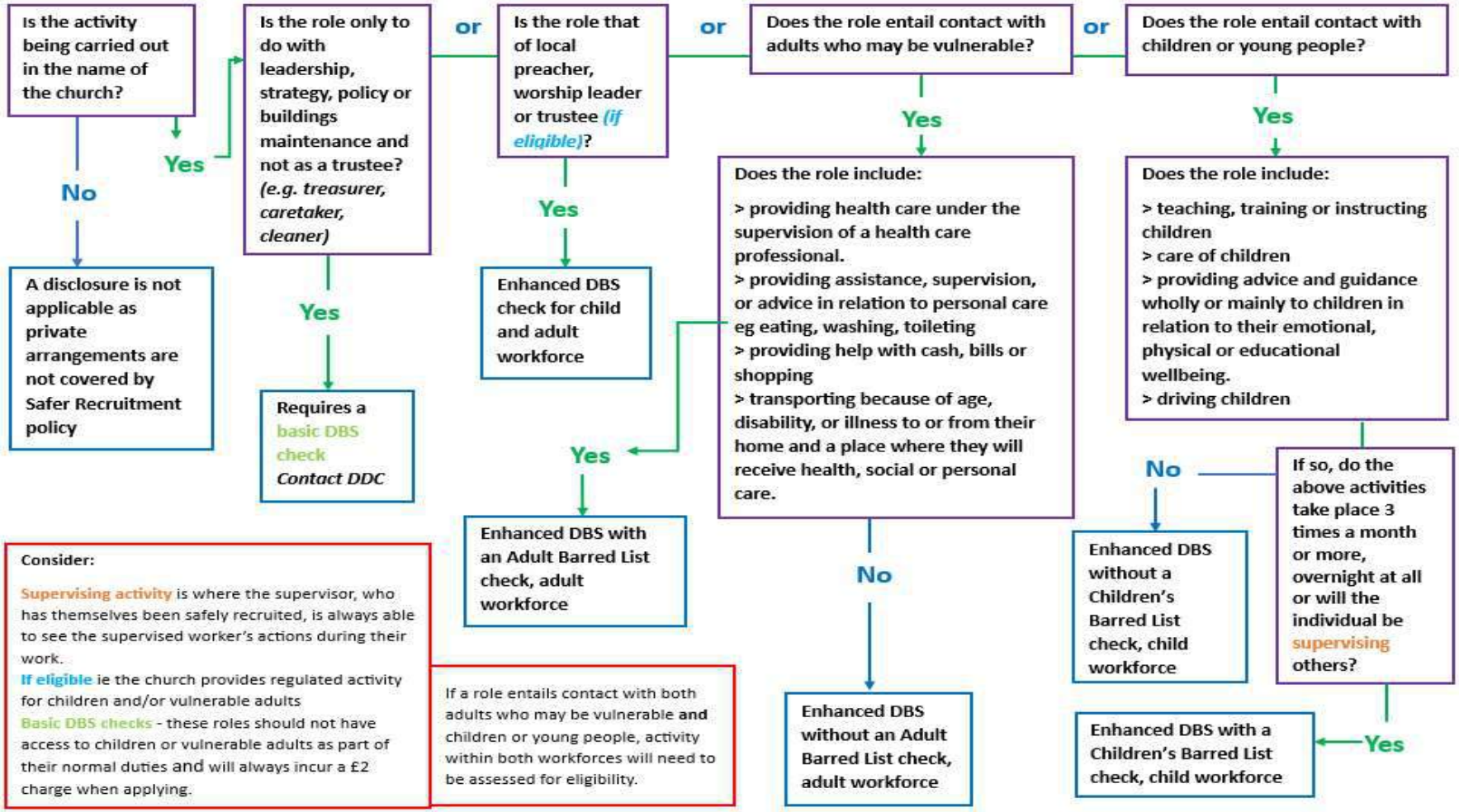
Information that may be disclosed on the different DBS checks

Information that may be included	Basic	Standard	Enhanced	Enhanced and barred
Unspent convictions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spent convictions (that are not protected)	✗	✓	✓	✓
Cautions, reprimands and final warnings (that are not protected)	✗	✓	✓	✓
Adult cautions which cannot be filtered	✗	✓	✓	✓
Adult convictions which cannot be filtered	✗	✓	✓	✓
Juvenile convictions which cannot be filtered	✗	✓	✓	✓
Inclusion on the children's barred list (where relevant to the post)	✗	✗	✗	✓
Inclusion on the adults' barred list (where relevant to the post)	✗	✗	✗	✓
Other relevant information. *This includes information about allegations, arrests, matters that resulted in no further action or not guilty verdicts. This information is not automatically included on enhanced DBS certificates.*	✗	✗	✓	✓

Is this regulated activity in the child workforce? Some questions to consider



Flowchart to aid decision making about level of DBS required



DBS Frequently asked questions

Is there a minimum age for a DBS check?

Yes, only individuals aged 16 years and over can be subject to a DBS check.

Can a joint DBS check for children and adults at risk be applied for?

Yes, a DBS check can be completed for someone working with children, adults at risk or both groups.

How frequently should we carry out a DBS recheck?

Every five years.

Can people use the Update Service?

Yes. If the individual has signed up to the update service, then a quick online status check can be carried out in place of a full DBS recheck.

Unless the status check reveals that new information has been added to the individual's DBS certificate, a full DBS recheck will not be needed.

How are DBS verifiers appointed?

If your church would like to register a DBS verifier, their name and contact details can be added by the minister.

If a different level of access is required e.g. for a circuit SGO, then the ROS should be informed who will make this request via the connexional safeguarding admin team.

The verifier/DDC user contact details have changed – what should happen now?

Please inform the ROS who will ensure DDC are notified via the connexional safeguarding admin team.

A verifier/DDC user is stepping down – what should happen now?

Please inform the ROS who will ensure DDC are notified via the connexional safeguarding admin team.

Can a verifier/DDC user process a family member's application?

No, an alternative processor will need to be identified.

How does a verifier/DDC user know when a disclosure has been issued?

When a Disclosure is issued, the applicant is always sent a paper copy to their home address directly from the DBS.

If the verifier has an email address, DDC will notify them via email, together with others nominated to receive them e.g. minister, safeguarding officer.

What should the verifier do if an applicant's check is blemished?

Please inform the ROS as soon as possible, forwarding a copy of **all** parts/pages of the disclosure so that the process can be commenced promptly.

If the verifier is not made aware when there is a blemish, please note that the Registered Body (DDC) is made aware of, but not the nature of, the blemish. This information is shared with the connexional safeguarding team who ensure that the blemished DBS process is initiated/progressed.

Handout for applicants using the Online Process

DDC

Handout For Applicants Using The Online Process

What Information do I Need?

1. **Your current full name and address**
2. **Any other names you have used, along with the dates you started and stopped using them**
3. **A full and continuous address history for the past 5 years, including UK postcodes, where applicable**
4. **Your passport details, if you have one**
5. **Your UK driving licence details, if you have one**
6. **Your UK National Insurance Number, if you have one**

How Many Documents do I Need?

The application process requires that you produce a number of original documents to support the data you will provide on the online application form. All documents must be in your **current name** (excluding UK Birth Certificate). At least one document must show your **current address** and one must show your **date of birth**.

The acceptable documents are divided into the 3 groups shown below. If you own a valid Passport and/or UK photo-card drivers licence, you must produce these, plus 1 or 2 additional documents from any group to make a **minimum of 3 documents in total** for a Route 1 Application.

If you do not own a valid Passport, UK/EU photocard Drivers Licence, original UK Birth Certificate, Adoption Certificate or a Biometric Residence Permit **and** you are an EEA or UK Citizen, then you can proceed with a Route 2 application. This will require 1 document from Group 2a PLUS 2 other documents from either Group 2a or 2b **and** consent to DDC undertaking an Identity Validation Check with Experian Ltd.

UK and EEA citizens who cannot produce the required documentation and non-EEA citizens who cannot produce a Group 1 document will need to apply using the DBS's paper application form and attend a local police station to have their fingerprints taken.

How Are The Documents Grouped?

Group 1 Documents

- Any current and valid Passport
- UK Biometric Residence Permit
- Current EU/UK Photocard Driving Licence
- UK Birth Certificate (issued with 12 months of DOB)
- UK Adoption Certificate

Group 2a Documents

- Current, non-EU Photocard Driving Licence
- UK/EU Paper Drivers Licence
- UK Birth Certificate (issued 12+ months after DOB)
- UK Marriage / Civil Partnership Certificate
- HM Forces ID Card
- UK Firearms Licence

Group 2b Documents

- UK/EEA mortgage statement*
- UK/EEA bank or building society statement**
- UK bank account opening letter**
- UK/EEA credit card statement**
- UK financial statement (eg pension)*
- P45* or P60*
- Council tax statement*
- Valid UK work permit or visa
- Valid letter of employer sponsorship
- Utility bill**
- Benefit statement**
- Government correspondence (eg HMRC)**
- Valid EU National ID card
- Valid 'PASS' card
- Letter from Headteacher or Principal (16 to 19 year olds only)

* *Issued in the last 12 months*
** *Issued in the last 3 months*

For more information, visit www.ddc.uk.net, or email contact@ddc.uk.net

v2.5- 18/09/13