

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Checking Policy

1. Introduction

Wootton Parish Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its employees, volunteers, and the wider community. As part of this commitment, we ensure that appropriate background checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, are conducted for relevant staff and volunteers.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors engaged by Wootton Parish Council whose roles involve working with children, vulnerable adults, or sensitive information. Councillors may also choose to undergo a voluntary DBS check.

3. Levels of DBS Checks

The level of DBS check required depends on the nature of the role:

- Basic Check – Provides details of unspent convictions and is required for roles involving general administration and financial management.
- Standard Check – Covers spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands, and final warnings and is required for roles with access to sensitive information.
- Enhanced Check – Includes all information from a standard check, plus relevant police information and barred list checks if working directly with children or vulnerable adults.

4. Process for DBS Checking

1. The need for a DBS check will be assessed at the recruitment stage based on the role's responsibilities.
2. Applicants will be informed of the requirement for a DBS check before employment or engagement.
3. The council will facilitate the application process and cover the cost of DBS checks where necessary.
4. DBS checks must be renewed every three years or earlier if required by law or specific circumstances.
5. Existing staff in roles that require a DBS check but have not previously undergone one will be required to complete a DBS check within a reasonable timeframe. The Parish Clerk will coordinate this process and ensure compliance.
6. Councillors who wish to undergo a DBS check voluntarily may request one through the Parish Clerk. The council will facilitate the process.

5. Handling DBS Disclosures with Previous Convictions

- A criminal conviction does not automatically bar an individual from employment or engagement with Wootton Parish Council.
- Each case will be assessed individually, considering:
 - The relevance of the offence to the role applied for.
 - The severity and nature of the offence.
 - The time elapsed since the offence.

- Any evidence of rehabilitation.
- Whether there is a legal or safeguarding restriction preventing employment in the role.
- If a conviction raises concerns about the individual's suitability, a confidential discussion will be held with the individual before any decision is made.
- The final decision will be made by the Parish Clerk and the Council's HR Committee, ensuring compliance with fair recruitment practices and legal obligations.

6. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All DBS disclosures will be handled in strict confidence and stored securely in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Information will only be shared with those involved in the decision-making process.

7. Appeals and Complaints

- If an applicant believes they have been unfairly treated due to a DBS disclosure, they may appeal in writing to the Parish Clerk within 10 working days of being notified of the decision.
- Appeals will be reviewed independently, and a final decision will be made within a reasonable timeframe.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if changes in legislation or best practices require updates.

Adopted by Wootton Parish Council 17th March 2025