

POLICY & PROCEDURE



SoLO
Life
Opportunities

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Charity No. 1102297
England Company No.
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DBS checking for staff & volunteers

Category: staff
volunteers
members with a learning disability

Introduction

SoLO Life Opportunities (SoLO) is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of:

- Our members with a learning disability
- Our staff
- Our volunteers
- The general public that we come in contact with

Policy Statement

When recruiting staff and volunteers to service our projects, we carry out the following checks:

- Application form is completed on expression of interest, listing full name, address, contact details and history of education, employment and voluntary work.
- Two referees are requested who have known the applicant for over 12 months, one of which must be the most recent employer (or in the case of a volunteer, someone who has known them in a professional capacity)

- Face to face interview with either the CEO (plus one or two others in senior positions), the Team Manager, a Project Manager or the Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- Disclosure & Barring check carried out before commencement of unsupervised activity.
- Staff and volunteers who can provide a DBS check (under six months old) can work under this check provided verification is received from the organisation who has countersigned it. Verification will be carried out using the standard SoLO request.
- Staff and volunteers who can provide a DBS check (under two years old) may start on scheme provided a) they are supervised by a member of staff who is DBS checked b) they can provide evidence that they are still working in the organisation where the DBS check originated from c) their current DBS check with SoLO is underway d) they have provided two good references.

Ongoing supervision of staff and volunteers is given on a regular basis by Project Leaders, Volunteer Co-ordinator and CEO and any concerns are reported to the Trustee Board.

With regard to the re-checking of existing staff and volunteers:

- Existing staff will not require their DBS checks renewed, provided that they have been in regular employment with SoLO and their circumstances have not changed (e.g. they have not had a very long, unexplained absence). They will be expected to sign a declaration to this effect.
- Staff who have been volunteers will have to have their DBS check renewed as a paid worker.
- Existing volunteers however will still have their DBS checks renewed every **three** years, or earlier, if there has been a break in service.
- SoLO will accept staff who work for us on a sessional basis (e.g. summer scheme staff) with DBS checks provided they can provide proof of continuous employment within a similar setting (i.e. school)

SoLO exercises its right to use its discretion to repeat the DBS check if it is deemed necessary. Circumstances that may require a DBS check to be carried out could be:

- Allegations made against an individual by a service user or someone they have come in contact with.
- Concerns are expressed by a Project Leader that may suggest further checks are necessary.
- Activity in relation to a service user that contravenes guidelines on adult protection or child protection.

The DBS re-check would be carried out in conjunction with any other sanctions that would be deemed necessary (e.g. suspension from duty), and in full consultation with the staff member of volunteer.

Due to current changes in the DBS regulations, it is no longer a requirement to carry out DBS checks on:

- Trustees
- Volunteers under 16 years of age

Therefore, it is essential that full reference checking, interviewing and further vetting (if required) is carried out to ensure the safeguarding of our members. Where concerns are raised with regard to the appointment of such individuals the final decision rests with the CEO and the Chairperson.

On-line DBS

There is now a facility for DBS checks to be carried out on-line and staff members or volunteers can sign up for this as soon as they have their application form reference number. This facility is open until 19 days after the certificate has been issued.

The benefit of this on-line registration to the individual is that this ensures the DBS is totally portable and can be used in other employment. There is a cost of £13.00 per year for this service and we would expect the employee to bear the cost of this themselves. There is no cost to the volunteer.

Where a SoLO employee has signed up for this service, they will be issued with a letter of permission. This letter of permission allows SoLO the right to access their DBS details. However, whenever this is actioned, SoLO will notify the individual that this is being done, and this will be logged.

Because SoLO as the employer no longer receives a duplicate copy of the disclosure, staff and volunteers are therefore required to bring in their disclosures, once received, to the SoLO office, in order for the details to be logged securely.

Failure to comply will result in further action being taken in the form of a "chasing" period, after which may result in suspension from duties, followed by termination of contract if the requirement has still not been met.