

### Introduction

These Top Tips aim to provide information to assist clubs in recognising their responsibilities for screening volunteers, establishing procedures for screening of volunteers, and identifying sources of further information and support.

NB: Reference is made in this text to 'volunteers'. However, the same principles apply to screening people employed to work within the club. For example, a part-time coach who receives a fee for his/her services or who is formally employed by the club.

### Screening

Screening is used here to mean checking, for example, checking if someone has a criminal record. It is one way of reducing the risk of recruiting volunteers who may be unsuitable to work with young people or vulnerable people.

Nothing can take the place of good practice when working with young and vulnerable people. Clubs should not assume that by screening volunteers they have done enough. It is vital to always carry out effective recruitment, training and supervision of all volunteers. Screening is a valuable tool in identifying unsuitable volunteers, but it is not foolproof. For example, 90% of child sex offenders have no relevant criminal record.

The Volunteering England website (see below) has an information sheet called "Screening and Police Checking", giving more detailed information about Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, equal opportunities for ex-offenders and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

### Why do Clubs need to Screen Volunteers?

Clubs need to screen volunteers for the following reasons:

- ❖ To make every possible effort to ensure the safety of young and vulnerable people within the club.
- ❖ To ensure clubs provide a duty of care to young and vulnerable people.
- ❖ As a matter of good policy and practice.
- ❖ To meet legal responsibilities through Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks – it is a criminal offence to take on someone who you know to be banned from working with young people, if they are to be with young people.

### Who should you screen?

Think about the volunteers within your club who might have unsupervised, isolated or regular one-to-one contact with young or vulnerable people, for example; a coach, an official, a chaperone, a team manager or a sports leader. The nature of volunteering in clubs allows for people changing from one role to another. For example, this year's fixtures secretary becomes next year's team manager. You should check anyone who may have the potential to abuse young or vulnerable people in some way.

### How do you go about screening volunteers?

Any screening procedures established by the sports club should be used consistently for all volunteers who might now, or in the future, have unsupervised, isolated or regular one-to-one contact with young and vulnerable people. Existing volunteers can be asked to provide the same information as new, potential volunteers.

### What do you need to know?

There are three levels of CRB checks – enhanced, standard and basic. The club will need enough information in order to receive a minimum of a Standard Disclosure from the CRB. You will need to follow the advice from the CRB on the information you are required to collect (as they have strict criteria on the ID that needs to be seen). However, the following gives some guidance on what information you will need about volunteers/potential volunteers:

- ❖ Clear identification (e.g. driving licence/passport and at least two utility bills).
- ❖ Their previous involvement in sport or volunteering.
- ❖ A self-declaration of: any criminal record; any notification to a social services department as being an actual or potential risk to young people; whether they have had action taken against them in relation to child abuse, sexual offences or violence.

All volunteers should be required to complete a volunteer profile/application and provide independent references from an appropriate source. The sensitive and confidential information could be a separate part of the form, which must be treated confidentially.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 allows ex-offenders to consider certain offences as 'spent' after a period of time, which varies according to the length of sentence given. Many paid and voluntary jobs that involve access to young and vulnerable people are exempt, which means that a prospective volunteer can be required to disclose all previous offences

### What to do with the information when you have it?

You will need to submit the relevant information to the CRB for checking. In order to make this check, you will need to be either a registered body with the CRB or make the application through an umbrella body, e.g. your national governing body (NGB). There is no cost for screening volunteers with the CRB (charges do apply for paid staff), but some umbrella registered bodies are making a small charge for the administration they have to undertake to process applications. Alternatively, your club could become a registered body at a cost of £300. Information held about individuals by a club may be subject to the Data Protection Act (you may need to check what your responsibilities are in terms of data protection). Information collected in confidence must be treated in confidence.

### After the check

What actions are you going to take if information is disclosed which may impact upon the individual's involvement as a volunteer? You may need to consider:

- ❖ The nature of the offence
- ❖ The nature of the voluntary role
- ❖ How long ago the offence was committed

## Top Tips

### Screening Volunteers

- ❖ The frequency of the offence and whether there is a pattern of similar offences
- ❖ The need for further information from the volunteer to clarify the exact nature of declared offences.

If you are unsure about what to do with potentially difficult information, it is important to check with a relevant body (see further information and other organisations below). Until you are confident that the individual has undergone the necessary checks, it is good practice not to leave them unsupervised with young or vulnerable people.

**NB:** The information given is only as good as its source. A clean criminal record might just mean that the individual has not yet been successfully prosecuted for offences against young people. Screening must not take the place of good practice around working with young and vulnerable people.

#### Further Information

The runningsports website ([www.runningsports.org](http://www.runningsports.org)) has other useful resources including Quick Guides “Volunteers”, along with other downloadable resources - Top Tips “Volunteers – General”, “Health & Safety of Volunteers”, “Involving Older People as Volunteers” and “Young People as Volunteers”, Role Outlines and information on training including workshops. Alternatively telephone the runningsports Hotline on 0800 363373. The website also has a list of Volunteer Recognition Awards that are available,

#### Other organisations worth checking out

Name	Telephone	Website
Child Protection In Sport Unit	0116 234 7278	<a href="http://www.thecpsu.org.uk">www.thecpsu.org.uk</a>
Coachwise 1 <sup>st</sup> 4sport	0113 201 5555	<a href="http://www.1st4sport.com">www.1st4sport.com</a>
Criminal Records Bureau	0870 9090 811	<a href="http://www.crb.gov.uk">www.crb.gov.uk</a>
NSPCC		<a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform">www.nspcc.org.uk/inform</a>
Information Commissioner’s Office (for Data Protection)	08456 306060	<a href="http://www.ico.gov.uk">www.ico.gov.uk</a>
Sports Coach UK	0113 274 4802	<a href="http://www.sportscoachuk.org">www.sportscoachuk.org</a>
Volunteering England	0845 305 6979	<a href="http://www.volunteering.org.uk">www.volunteering.org.uk</a>
National Governing Body of Sport	0845 850 8508	<a href="http://www.sportengland.org">www.sportengland.org</a>

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