



Bookmark

Suitability of Ex-Offenders Policy

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We exist to change children's life stories through the joy of reading. We partner with schools to develop whole school reading cultures, and to provide one-to-one reading support.

1. Introduction

What does this document do? This is a policy which sets out the standards which the Charity has adopted in its handling of the recruitment of ex-offenders as volunteers and employees.

2. General principles

- 1.1 As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions that are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Bookmark complies fully with the code of practice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice> and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly;
- 1.2 Bookmark undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed;
- 1.3 Bookmark can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Bookmark are legally entitled to know about, and where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended);
- 1.4 Bookmark can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected;
- 1.5 Bookmark is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background;
- 1.6 Bookmark will make available to all DBS applicants, this Suitability of Ex-Offenders Policy;
- 1.7 Bookmark actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records;
- 1.8 Bookmark select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience;
- 1.9 An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job 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 the position;
- 1.10 Bookmark ensures that all those in Bookmark who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences;
- 1.11 Bookmark also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;



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- 1.12 At interview, or in a separate discussion, Bookmark ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of the position of volunteer or employee;
- 1.13 Bookmark makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request; and
- 1.14 Bookmark undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing the offer of position of volunteer or employee. All information will only be retained for as long as is necessary, as outlined in our Data Retention and Destruction Policy.