

Volunteer Screening & Vetting Procedures



Document Owner Lead Safeguarding Officer

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Primary Document Family B. Staying Safe

Additional Document Family H. Membership, Volunteering & Complaints

Applies To

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| ☒ Volunteers | ☐ Staff |
| ☒ Groups & Districts | ☒ Centres & Campsites |
| ☐ Contractors & Partners | ☒ Projects & Events |
| | ☒ DFs |

Background

Woodcraft Folk is committed to the safety of children, young people and adults involved in its groups, camps and project activities. Woodcraft Folk therefore commits to implementing safer recruitment and selection of all volunteers and staff. As part of this commitment all volunteers and staff will be subject to vetting and screening checks appropriate to their role, which may include:

- Seeking written references
- Checks against the list of individuals barred from working with children and young people
- Seeking information on any relevant criminal conviction or caution
- Probationary or trial periods

Vetting is undertaken to ensure that children and young people attending Woodcraft Folk groups and activities have the support, guidance and care they need and that Woodcraft Folk does not engage staff and volunteers who are unsuitable to work with children.

Legal & Governance Framework

Screening is undertaken in keeping with the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualifications) Regulations 2009. All data gathered as part of the screening procedures will be handled securely in keeping with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Woodcraft Folk's Data Protection Policy.

While a criminal record does not automatically bar individuals from working or volunteering with Woodcraft Folk, Woodcraft Folk will not engage any individual

who is barred from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006 of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009, including instances where someone is barred by association.

In Scotland, volunteer roles in Woodcraft Folk are subject to the requirements laid out in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act (2007) and the Disclosure (Scotland) Act (2020).

Requirements for Volunteers

Everyone volunteering to support Woodcraft Folk's activities must complete registration with Woodcraft Folk and:

- Provide two referees willing to support their application and confirm their suitability to volunteer or work with children and young people - at least one of these referees should be external to Woodcraft Folk. Should these references give cause for concern, advice must be sought from the Lead Safeguarding Officer.
- Declare any criminal convictions relating to the abuse of children, however long ago they may have been. This is an exemption from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Confirm that they are not barred from working with children, and that they do not reside with someone who is barred (disqualified by association)
- Read and agree to abide by Woodcraft Folk's Safeguarding Policy
- Read and follow the Local Safeguarding Plan
- Undergo relevant safeguarding training, whether in person or online

In addition, in England & Wales all individuals over 16 years who are engaged regularly in unsupervised activity that involves the care, supervision, instruction or education of children are required to complete an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure (DBS). In Scotland all individuals over 16 years who undertake volunteering roles involving contact with children and young people are required to become members of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG).

We define regularly to mean any of the following:

- More than once a month
- Intensively, more than four days in a month
- Overnight (or between the hours of 02:00 and 06:00)

Occasional or one-off volunteers who have not completed an Enhanced DBS or PVG application must be supervised by a named individual who is a registered volunteer with Woodcraft Folk with a current DBS or PVG scheme membership. This should be detailed on a Safeguarding Declaration and submitted to safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk for reference if required.

Only volunteers and staff who have undergone an enhanced DBS or PVG scheme membership can undertake the following activities:

- Attend camps or residential events
- Supervision of toileting or changing
- Personal care tasks, such as nappy changing
- Giving medication

Individual DFs who attend a DF group or event and do not take on any role of responsibility will not be required to undergo the above vetting and screening processes, but must register nationally as members of Woodcraft Folk. DFs who choose to take on roles of responsibility at group sessions or at camps/residentials (e.g. first aider, clan leader, group night helper) must undergo the same screening and vetting as any other volunteer.

Risk assessment process

When an offending history is disclosed, Woodcraft Folk's Membership Team will anonymously log the offence and any action taken. If the nature of the offence/s require a risk assessment to be completed the Lead Safeguarding Officer will be informed.

As part of the risk assessment process the individual member and their local Membership Secretary will be contacted for further information. The risk assessment will consider:

- Is the individual barred from working with children or vulnerable adults?
- Did the applicant openly disclose information about the offence?
- Did the offence result in a conviction, caution or reprimand?
- Does the offence involve violent or threatening behaviour?
- Does the offence involve children or young people?
- Is the offence spent?
- Was the individual a juvenile at the time of the offence?
- Was this a singular offence?
- Does the offence involve drugs or other illegal substances?
- Does the offence involve fraud or theft?
- Is the offence related to driving?

The individual and the local Membership Secretary will be informed of the outcome of the risk assessment, which may place restrictions on the activities to be undertaken or set requirements around supervision or training needs.

All screening decisions are reviewed by the Safeguarding Committee to ensure appropriateness and consistency of decision making.

Vetting International Guests

All international guests/volunteers over the age 18 who are attending or participating in Woodcraft Folk activity must go through some form of vetting.

The DBS/PVG are unable to access criminal record checks abroad so international guests must provide a copy of an equivalent check from their home country (if available) before attending overnight stays. Those who do not have a check and are not going to be responsible for the supervision of children should complete a safeguarding declaration form, which should be supported with references. International guests cannot be the named leader for a group without a DBS/PVG or international equivalent. In the case of international camps and other events involving member organisations of IFM-SEI, camp/event organisers will seek assurances from those organisations that adults accompanying their delegations have undergone appropriate vetting in their own country.

Complaints

Any member wishing to raise a complaint about their treatment in relation to the above procedures should do so, in writing, to the Chief Executive. An investigation will then be conducted and the individual will receive written notification as to the outcome.

See Also

Policies

- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy](#)
- [Volunteering Policy](#)

Appendix I: Risk Assessment of Offences

The table below summarises Woodcraft Folk's approach to screening offences disclosed by applicants or flagged via a record check. It is intended to give guidance regarding the approach that will be taken to convictions that *do not* result in barring by DBS/Disclosure Scotland.

A calculator to determine if offences are 'spent' is available at unlock.org.uk/disclosure-calculator/

Motoring Offences

e.g. dangerous driving, failing to report an accident, driving motor vehicle with excess alcohol

Spent?	Single?	Action
Yes	Yes	No action
Yes	No	Not a barrier to volunteering, but not permitted to drive for Woodcraft Folk
No	Yes	Not a barrier to volunteering, but not permitted to drive for Woodcraft Folk until offence is spent
No	No	Not a barrier to volunteering, but not permitted to drive for Woodcraft Folk

Violent & Threatening Offences

e.g. affray, assault, possession of offensive weapon

Spent?	Single?	Action
Yes	Yes	Additional information required to inform risk assessment, unless > 10 years since offence
Yes	No	Additional information required to inform risk assessment
No	Yes	Additional information required to inform risk assessment
No	No	Application declined

Theft & Related Offences

e.g. burglary, handling stolen goods, theft

Spent?	Single?	Action
Yes	Yes	No action
Yes	No	Not a barrier to volunteering, but subject to risk assessment, may not be permitted to handle funds or act as Treasurer
No	Yes	Not a barrier to volunteering, but subject to risk assessment, may not be permitted to handle funds or act as Treasurer
No	No	Not a barrier to volunteering, but not permitted to handle funds or act as Treasurer

Drug Offences

e.g. possession, possession with intent to supply

Spent?	Single?	Action
Yes	Yes	No action
Yes	No	Not a barrier to volunteering, but must agree to abide by Woodcraft Folk's Drug & Alcohol Policy
No	Yes	Additional information required to inform risk assessment - if approved, must agree to abide by Woodcraft Folk's Drug & Alcohol Policy
No	No	Additional information required to inform risk assessment - if approved, must agree to abide by Woodcraft Folk's Drug & Alcohol Policy

Miscellaneous Offences

e.g. aggravated trespass, breach of the peace, criminal damage, obstruction

Spent?	Single?	Action
Yes	Yes	No action
Yes	No	Additional information required to inform risk assessment
No	Yes	Additional information required to inform risk assessment
No	No	Additional information required to inform risk assessment

Appendix II: Who Needs a DBS/PVG

The table below has been designed to help individuals identify the level of vetting needed for their role in Woodcraft Folk.

<i>Role</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>DBS/PVG Requirements</i>
Group Volunteer, helping once a month or more	Yes	Yes	Enhanced DBS or PVG scheme membership required
Regular Group Volunteer, helping out less than once a month	Yes	Yes	England & Wales: DBS not required but the individual must complete a safeguarding declaration and identify a named supervisor Scotland: PVG membership required
Occasional helper, assisting as a one off or ad hoc arrangement	No	No	England & Wales: Not required but the individual must complete a safeguarding declaration and identify a named supervisor Scotland: Not permitted
DF: participant with no leader responsibilities	Yes	No	Not required
DF (supervised): with some leader responsibilities	Yes	Yes	Not required
DF: with some leader responsibilities	Yes	Yes	Enhanced DBS or PVG membership required
One off visitor or specialist (e.g. workshop facilitator)	No	No	Not required but the individual must complete a safeguarding declaration and identify a named supervisor

<i>Role</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>DBS/PVG Requirements</i>
Volunteering on camp	Yes	Yes	Enhanced DBS or PVG membership required
International Guests	No	Yes - if in regular activity	Criminal record check from the home nation to be provided if available, and the individual must complete a safeguarding declaration and identify a named supervisor
General Council member (Trustee)	Yes	Yes	Enhanced DBS <i>and</i> PVG membership required
District Committee member	Yes	Yes	Not required (unless <i>also</i> group helper etc.)
Membership Secretary	Yes	Yes	Enhanced DBS or PVG membership required
Local Safeguarding Lead	Yes	Yes	Enhanced DBS or PVG membership required
Treasurer	Yes	Yes	Basic DBS/Level 1 Disclosure required (if not already PVG member)*
Centre Volunteer Warden, on-site overnight	Yes	Yes	Enhanced DBS or PVG membership required
Warden guest, on-site but no contact with visiting groups and no access to spaces occupied by visiting groups	No	No	Not required but the individual must complete a safeguarding declaration and be supervised by the named warden

* Level 1 Disclosure replaced Basic Disclosure in Scotland from 2025