

PRO-ACTION

The Skills & Thrills to Help Shape & Inspire Young Lives

Guidance Document on working with children & young people For Museums in Hertfordshire

Background

Hertfordshire Museum Service has affiliated to Pro-Action Hertfordshire to receive support in the work of museums in relation to children and young people.

Pro-Action is a membership organisation supporting and representing over 200 organisations from sports, dance, youth, arts, faith based, uniformed and beyond, who deliver high quality services to over 40,000 children and young people across Hertfordshire.

Pro-Action works to strengthen and grow those groups and individuals who provide activities to children and young people. It works in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector agencies to get the best results for its members.

One of the things requested after affiliation was that Pro-Action produce some guidance on key areas in relation to potential working with children and young people in the context of a museum. Whilst it is impossible to provide guidance for every conceivable situation the following has been prepared as a basis for on going training and support to staff and volunteers who work and support museums in Hertfordshire.

In this guidance:

The guidance covers the following areas in relation to working and volunteering with children and young people:

- About the Disclosure & Barring Service (formerly know as Criminal Records Bureau, CRB).
- Ratio's for working with children & young people.
- Do's and don'ts of engaging with young people.
- Taking pictures with children and young people around.
- Policies that should be in place.
- Recruiting and supporting volunteers.

Disclosure & Barring Service

What is a Disclosure?

A Disclosure is a document containing information held by the police and government departments that provides details of a person's criminal record, including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer (PNC). It can also contain details from lists and other information held by the DBS as well as information held by local police forces.

A Disclosure, therefore, enables organisations to check the background of a job applicant (paid or voluntary) to ensure they do not have a history that makes them unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. A Disclosure is an essential element of the appointment process within any organisation, forming part of a structured recruitment policy that should include interviewing, checking of references, staff supervision, training and ongoing support.

For those working with children or vulnerable adults they would generally need to apply for:

Enhanced Disclosure

An Enhanced Disclosure should be applied for where the appointment involves a substantial degree of contact with children including unsupervised activities such as teaching, supervising, training or providing advice/guidance on well-being.

The Barred Lists

If an applicant is involved in Regulated Activity the DBS check must include a check of the barred lists. The Disclosure and Barring Service is a non-departmental public body (NDPB), sponsored by the Home Office. The DBS is responsible for maintaining the two barred lists, the 'Children's and Vulnerable Adults' lists. Using information from a number of sources including the Police, local authorities and employers, the DBS case workers assess the risk of harm that an individual would pose if they were to work with vulnerable groups. Where an individual has been referred to the DBS due to harming; causing harm; putting at risk of harm; attempting to harm; or inciting another to harm a child or vulnerable adult, the DBS will consider all relevant information in deciding if its appropriate to add that person to one or both the barred lists.

Why carry out a DBS Check?

Following the tragic murders in Soham the Bichard Inquiry questioned the way employers recruit people to work with vulnerable groups, and particularly the way background checks are carried out. Recommendation 19 of the Inquiry Report highlighted the need for a single agency to vet all individuals who want to work or volunteer with children or vulnerable adults and to bar unsuitable people from doing so. The report led to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVG Act) 2006.

A person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law (and liable to prosecution incurring imprisonment and/or a fine) if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups. An organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with those groups will also be breaking the law (and liable to prosecution incurring imprisonment and/or a fine). Those eligible for Enhanced DBS checks are all those working within regulated positions.

Only Enhanced DBS Disclosures are available for those working with children or the vulnerable. Standard DBS checks are no longer available for workers with these groups

Regulated Activity in respect of children

You work in a Regulated Activity if, unsupervised, you teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, or provide advice and guidance on well-being or drive a vehicle only for children. This applies if you work frequently with children (once a week or more often) or intensively (4 days in any period of 30 days), or overnight (between 2am and 6pm). So, for example, if you are a youth worker or working with a group on a weekly basis you are in a Regulated Activity and require an **Enhanced Plus check**. Likewise if you only volunteer to join the annual summer camp or holiday project and work for more than 4 days in a row you will need an **Enhanced Plus check**.

Indicative list of posts/roles that will require a check:

Group 1

Those employees and volunteers working with children and young people aged under 18

All the following roles/posts will require either an Enhanced Plus or Enhanced check:

- Any workers with a brief to work with children and families
- Youth workers/leaders
- Children's worker/leaders
- Summer and other holiday project workers
- Crèche workers
- Family support workers where work is done separately with children
- Parent and toddler group workers (if parent not attending)
- Sports or activity workers/leaders (e.g. art, drama)
- Music leaders where the choir or group is mainly children and young people
- Drivers for young people's and children's activities as organised by the organisation – not private parental arrangements
- All managers of youth, children or family workers
- Caretakers where role includes some supervision of children or young people

Group 2

The following roles do not normally require a Criminal Record check unless they regularly undertake any of the roles in groups 1 above. Should this be the case then an adjustment will need to be made to their role profile to reflect this on either a permanent or temporary basis:

- Caretaker without any inherent supervisory responsibilities for children or young people
- Refreshment servers
- Choir leaders for an adult choir
- Welcome stewards
- Guides and shop staff

Recruiting staff and volunteers

Those who have responsibility for the recruitment of workers must understand that a criminal records check is only part (albeit an essential one) of a safe recruitment process. This process is crucial in preventing unsuitable or dangerous individuals gaining access to vulnerable groups. It includes:

- The completion of a job/volunteer application form,
- The completion of a self declaration form,
- An interview,
- Taking up references
- A criminal records check
- The applicant's agreement to abide by the organisation's safeguarding policy

It is important to stress to applicants that having a criminal record should not necessarily bar the person from being appointed unless children or vulnerable adults would be put at risk. The scope of a criminal records check must be explained to the applicant, including the fact that strict confidentiality is observed. Information relating to the Rehabilitation of Offenders and Safe Storage policies should be made available for applicants to see.

Importantly, individuals should also be asked to complete a self-declaration form before a check is applied for. This gives a person the opportunity to discuss any past issues which could emerge in a check. In such circumstances advice can be given on whether or not information would prevent someone working with children or vulnerable adults. Also, later on where there is a 'blemished' disclosure, the information given by the applicant in a self-declaration can in some cases help in determining the outcome (for example, in assessing their honesty).

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

In relation to on going support of staff and volunteers each person should have:

- A clear role description.
- An opportunity for regular 'supervision' meetings to ensure all is going well and identify any training or development of the role.
- Understanding of the policies and procedures adopted by the museum, and agree to work within them.
- Knowledge of who to speak to if they are in need of clarification of their duties, or concerned about any aspect of the work they are undertaking.

Ratios when working with children & young people

When you're running activities for children and young people, you will need a certain amount of adult supervision to help keep them safe. We have outlined some suggested adult to child ratios below.

Staffing and supervision ratios can sometimes be difficult to judge. It is important that you have sufficient staff and volunteers in place to ensure the safety of children – and that these adults are suitably equipped and trained to undertake these tasks.

Each museum, its staff and volunteers will need to have:

- an understanding of their responsibility to keep children and young people safe
- codes of practice
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all relevant staff and volunteers.

The level of supervision needs to be appropriate to the children involved in the activity. This could vary depending on:

- age (see table below)
- gender
- behaviour
- abilities within your group
- nature and duration of activities
- competence and experience of staff involved
- requirements of location, accommodation or organisation based
- any special medical needs
- specialist equipment needed.

The following table shows recommended adult to child ratios.

These are partially based on Ofsted guidelines and would be suitable for most organisations working with children and young people:

Child's age	Amount of adults	Amount of children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
13-18	1	10

Note: There should always be a minimum of two people in any group regardless of its size so that if an incident arises one person can respond to the incident whilst the other manages the children/young people.

Other aspects to consider regarding ratio's:

Any staff new to your organisation who have not had a vetting or barring check should not be left alone with children or take them to the toilet unaccompanied. Until a positive check has been received the individual should be considered as an extra helper, not as part of the basic ratio figure.

If the group has children of mixed genders, ideally there should be at least one responsible adult of each gender.

First aid ratios

If your group works with children and young people on a day-to-day basis, it is recommended that at least one of your staff and volunteers is trained in first aid.

If you are running one-off events, check the Safe Network web site, safe events for recommended ratios. www.safenetwork.org.uk

Under health & safety every venue should have appropriate first aid boxes, accident book, etc depending on the size and activities undertaken.

Unaccompanied children & young people

Depending on the location of your museum you may get children or young people visiting your museum without an adult. It is wise to have an agreed policy on this.

As a team you need to decide how many young people you are okay with being in the museum at any one time. This will depend on factors like size of museum, physical arrangement, etc.

You also need to be aware of action that you might take if a very young child came in alone, or someone who you felt was in some way at risk e.g. if a child regularly came into the museum, maybe didn't have warm clothes or a coat in winter. We cannot jump to conclusions, but being clear about who to speak to and how to take any concerns you have further, without saying or doing the wrong thing, is important. That is why attending a child protection training course is a positive thing to do.

Taking and using Photographs

Photographs that include people should only be taken within any setting with permission. For children & young people written permission should be obtained from their parent/primary carer. It is often incorporated into a Consent Form which is signed if parents are leaving their children to take part in an activity. If parents and children are taking part together and photographs are to be taken then consent forms are needed for use of their image.

Under no circumstances should camera phones be used to take images within the museum. In fact, more and more places are requiring staff and volunteers to not have their mobile phones on them during their duties.

If photographs are taken, all images taken should be stored on museum computers according to data protection act, policy and procedures.

Training

At any one time in the museum there should always be:

- At least one first aid trained person.
- Someone with DBS check, who should be a staff member or senior volunteer, and who has undertaken appropriate Child Protection training.

Policies & Procedures

The following policies relating to children & young people should be in place as a minimum; the larger the museum, offering wider activities will need to ensure that they have sufficient policies in place.

- Health & safety policy
- Child Protection Policy including unaccompanied child & safer staffing
- Equality & Diversity
- Data protection
- Internet/social media policy
- Taking and using images policy

Some do's:

- Always work within the policies and procedures of the museum.
- In relation to children & young people there should always have at least 2 members of the team before you open up or start an activity.
- When/if a number of young people turn up on an adhoc basis, treat them as you would any other visitor to the museum. Follow the agreed guidelines.
- Do feel comfortable. If you do not feel comfortable in some situations then discuss this with your supervisor.

PRO-ACTION

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