

Deanshanger Good Neighbours Procedure for DBS checks

Procedure

1. At registration, volunteers are advised that some roles may require a DBS check and are asked to confirm if they are willing to undertake one.
2. The Good Neighbours (GN) Scheme Safeguarding Lead will work with the GN Coordinator to assess each volunteer role and risk assess it to identify whether it is eligible for a DBS check and if so which type of check. The DBS eligibility tool can be found at www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check. It is noted that the person managing a volunteer who is eligible for a DBS, should also undergo a DBS.
3. The GN scheme will obtain DBS checks through SERVE as an umbrella organisation. The forms can be obtained from them and returned for processing. They will invoice the Parish Council clerk for the required fee (£10 currently, 2024) once it is completed.
4. If a volunteer already has an enhanced DBS of the right type needed for the role they may request that the Good Neighbours scheme uses this and where appropriate a DBS can be 'transferred'.
5. DBS verification (checks of ID original documents) will be undertaken by the GN scheme Safeguarding lead, GN Coordinator, the Parish Clerk or a nominated member of the GN Working Party.
6. When completing the DBS form, section 61 needs to have a named position that the DBS is applied for rather than just Volunteer. This can be Deanshanger Good Neighbour Volunteer.
7. DBS will be viewed by the GN scheme Safeguarding lead, coordinator, the Parish Clerk or a nominated member of the GN Working Party.
8. DBS will be recorded on the database of volunteers and will be renewed every three years or sooner if guidance changes or circumstances of the volunteer or their role changes.
9. Volunteers will be issued with identification badges which carry their name and photograph and a statement that the bearer has been DBS checked, if this is relevant, with a date and a working party or the Parish Clerk's signature.

10. An enhanced DBS check and/or additional information may indicate that a person may not be suitable for volunteering in a certain or any role. When such a report is received, the GN Safeguarding Officer, will discuss this with the GN working party Chair to consider if the conviction or report is recent enough or serious enough to prevent the person acting as a volunteer for the scheme. GN may consult with advisers in the local authority. If the volunteer is unhappy with the result, they may use the Complaints procedure to have the decision reviewed.

Background

DBS checks are not essential for all volunteers. Guidance from NCVO makes it clear that ‘Only certain posts and activities are eligible for checks, and DBS checks should not be used simply as a “just in case” box ticking exercise.’ Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, only organisations that work with children and/or vulnerable adults are allowed to ask about spent convictions.

There are three available routes for DBS checks: Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced and barred list. Not all roles in paid or voluntary work are eligible for checks. The DBS eligibility lists, and explanation of the three kinds of check, can be found on the government’s website www.GOV.UK. Checks for eligible volunteers are free of charge.

Six categories of ‘regulated activity’ with adults are described in the legislation. Anyone working in these activities may be liable to an ‘enhanced and barred list’ check. Two of these categories could apply to volunteers in Good Neighbour Schemes. They are:

1. Anyone who provides day to day assistance to an adult because of their age, illness or disability, where that assistance includes at least one of the following, is in regulated activity:
 - managing the person’s cash,
 - paying the person’s bills, or
 - shopping on their behalf.
2. Any drivers and any assistants who transport an adult because of their age, illness or disability to or from places where they have received, or will be receiving, health care, relevant personal care or relevant social work, are in regulated activity. This does not include taxi drivers, and does not include trips taken for purposes other than to receive health care, personal care or social work (for example, trips for pleasure are excluded).

A person whose role includes the day-to-day management or supervision of any person who is engaging in regulated activity, is also in regulated activity. We should note that the phrase ‘day to day activity,’ which does not appear to apply to most Good Neighbour scheme volunteers, is not explained. The government guidance includes the following two examples:

‘A volunteer who collects shopping lists and the cash to pay for the shopping from older adults’ homes, who then does the shopping on their behalf, would be engaging in regulated activity.’

‘A befriender who helps a disabled person compile their weekly shopping list is *not* in regulated activity.’

This appears to imply that a volunteer who visits a vulnerable adult as a befriender, or in order to carry out a household task, is not in regulated activity. Similarly, someone who happens to take a vulnerable adult for a drive on a fine day, to help reduce their sense of isolation, is not in regulated activity. Driving vulnerable adults to health or social care appointments, whether or not that is on a ‘day to day’ basis, *is* regulated activity.

The position of Good Neighbour schemes is unclear when the guidance refers to friends and neighbours:

‘A friend who takes their neighbour to a hospital appointment would not be in regulated activity, as this is a personal relationship.’

Further, regulated activity does not include 'any activity carried out in the course of ... personal, non-commercial relationships'. These are defined as:

'arrangements where either no money changes hands, or any money that does change hands is not part of a commercial relationship (for example, gifting a friend money for petrol after they have driven you to the hospital), and the arrangement is made between friends or family friends.'

Each volunteer's DBS certificate should be seen by at least one member of the scheme committee. It is a good idea to keep a record of when these were seen and by who.

Further information about the Disclosure and Barring Service is available on the Government website at www.gov.uk.

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