

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service)

In the current situation, many organisations have transferred their face to face befriending services to distance befriending, predominantly telephone befriending. Therefore, Befriending Networks contacted the DBS for clarification on DBS checks:

The majority of our members have volunteers who visit people in their homes for support and to reduce social isolation. Obviously with the current situation, this cannot take place so we are advising members to implement telephone support. This could result in the recruitment of many new volunteers purely for this role. Therefore, we would like a definitive answer as to whether telephone befriending from home or office based would be eligible for any kind of DBS check. The volunteers would be providing general conversation, checking on individual's circumstances around health and wellbeing and possibly signposting to other organisations.

Here is their response:

“In regard to DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, this is the guidance from the Department of Health in relation to the conditions of meeting ‘regulated activity’ with vulnerable adults; please note the six listed activities that define how an individual will meet ‘regulated activity’.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216900/Regulated-Activity-Adults-Dec-2012.pdf

From the information you have provided* there would *appear* to be no requirement (or entitlement) for the befrienders to undergo the disclosure check conducive to ‘regulated activity’; they would not appear to be meeting any of the specific activities listed in the guidance.

The befriender role would not appear to meet other criteria either; I have provided the guidance to those working in the ‘adult workforce’ for your perusal.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/735504/Adult_workforce_guide_v10_0_030818.pdf

However, please note, the employing or recruiting organisation are always considered to be best placed to determine if an individual requires a Disclosure check.

The Basic level check is accessible to all and the following web link provides extensive information.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/basic-dbs-checks-guidance>

There has been an update regarding the checking of ID documents, more information at:

[**COVID-19: Changes to DBS ID checking guidelines**](#)
[Temporary changes to ID checking guidelines are being made as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.](#)”

SHOPPING AND DBS

These are the Guidelines if volunteers are carrying out shopping:

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 a person's cash
- Paying the person's bills
- Shopping on their behalf

For example:

1. 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.
2. A befriender who helps a disabled person compile their weekly shopping list is not in regulated activity.

Further information/support

We are here should you wish to discuss this further; the Befriending Networks team can be contacted on

<https://www.befriending.co.uk/contact/>