



RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

Giving people a fair say in DBS checks

Why recruit someone with a criminal conviction?

27%

Of working age adults have a criminal record (11m people!)

86%

Of employers of people with criminal convictions rate them as good at their job

£123m

Cost of Social Care Agency staff to GM Local Authority 2020-2023

17%

of prison leavers get a job within a year

275k

National vacancies across health & social care (2023)



How to support and recruit people with criminal convictions:

- **During the application process**
- **When something is flagged on a DBS check**
- **When a decision has been made on recruitment**

During application process

What?

- Be transparent! What checks are needed for the role? What is the process?
- Use plain English and explain any terminology.
- What are the legal requirements, and what information will they need to have ready?
- Update the applicant as much as possible, ideally so that they can track themselves.
- If Early Disclosure is asked for on an Application Form, make it clear that people will have opportunity to explain what they declare.

Why?

- It's important not create false expectations and risk letting people down and re-traumatising them.
- It can feel like you need a legal degree to apply for a job, so sharing quick links to clear information can speed up the process for everyone.
- It's not always possible to get things done immediately, but realistic expectations give people the opportunity to make adjustments in their lives.
- People have an obligation to disclose certain convictions but may experience a lot of anxiety when doing so.

During application process

Examples from GM partners:

Transparency:

GMCA Framework for Managing Criminal Record Checks, p5

Back on Track Applicants with a criminal record Policy & Procedure, p6

Plain English:

Bolton Foundation Trust Application Form, p7

Northern Care Alliance DBS Guide, p9

Update the applicant as much as possible:

Bolton Foundation Trust Application Tracking, pp7-8

Make it clear that people will have opportunity to explain what they declare:

Persona Support Working For Us page, p10

North West Ambulance Service early disclosure form, p12

When something is flagged on a DBS check

What?

- Provide chance for the person to provide context, ideally face to face.
- Use strengths-based questions to explore how they have changed, and the journey they have been on.
- Approach with an attitude of empathy as to why people may commit crime, and why talking about it is hard

Why?

- Give people chance to showcase who they are - not who they used to be. Meeting face to face to have a fair say might be the most effective way to do this.
- The situations which led to an individual's criminal records – and experiences since – likely come with significant trauma and low self-esteem.
- Recognise that putting up walls are an important part of protecting against trauma, and employers need to demonstrate they can be trusted as well as the other way round.

When something is flagged on a DBS check

Examples from GM partners:

Chance for the person to provide context:

Bolton Foundation Trust DBS policy, p8

Use strengths-based questions:

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council Positive Disclosure Assessment Checklist, p13

Approach with an attitude of empathy:

Persona Support Risk Assessment Template, p10-11

Following a decision

What?

- During onboarding, explore any access arrangements that people will need to succeed. (e.g., managing mental health or recovery)
- Highlight any support offers as part of the employee package.
- If they are not successful due to a DBS return, call them and offer a time to talk through why this is.

Why?

Just as with health conditions, disabilities, or caring responsibilities, there may be adjustments people with criminal records need e.g. to attend appointments or managing co-occurring conditions.

Help people to take responsibility and adapt their role to their lives and past experiences by making clear what additional support they might be able to access as an employee.

Hearing this news is likely to be difficult, so they deserve to hear it person to person and have a chance to gain constructive feedback for other roles.

Following a decision



Examples from GM partners:

Explore any access arrangements that people will need to succeed:

Persona Support Wellness Action Plan, p11

Highlight any support offers as part of the employee package:

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, IPS & Turning Point Case Study, p14

If they are not successful due to a DBS return, call them and offer a time to talk through why this is:

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council Letter to inform of outcome of meeting, p14