

Review notes:
No changes required

Royal Northern College of Music

Disclosure and Barring Policy

Policy & Procedure

Department: Human Resources

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Resources

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Committee / Board of Governors

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RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC

1. Introduction

The College is committed to ensuring that its application and recruitment processes act to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students and staff, prevent unsuitable individuals from working at the College and that all applicants are treated fairly and lawfully.

The College uses the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checking service to obtain information upon which to assess applicants' suitability for appointment to relevant positions which involve working with children, vulnerable adults and/or in positions of trust.

2. Terminology

The following terms are used in this policy:

DBS – Disclosure & Barring Service.

Disclosure – the report produced by the DBS following a standard DBS check, enhanced DBS check and/or enhanced check for regulated activity, which includes information regarding an individual's criminal background.

Standard DBS check – reveals details of any convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings received by the individual, regardless of the length of time since the incident.

Enhanced DBS check – reveals details of any convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings received by the individual, regardless of the length of time since the incident plus any additional information held locally by police forces that is considered by the police to be relevant to the post applied for (e.g. investigations that have not led to a criminal conviction). The police decide what, if any, information will be added to the disclosure.

Enhanced check for regulated activity – reveals the same information as an enhanced DBS check and confirms whether or not the individual is included on the children's or adult's barred lists.

3. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all individuals who have applied to work at the College and all individuals who currently work at the College at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual workers and agency staff.

4. Applications for a DBS disclosure

The College will consider the positions which are eligible for DBS checks and the level of such checks relevant to those positions (for example, standard DBS checks, enhanced DBS checks and/or enhanced checks for regulated activity) having regard to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, the Police Act 1997, the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and relevant eligibility guidance issued by the DBS from time to time.

Where a Disclosure is required by the College:

- this will be confirmed to applicants, together with details of the process which will be followed in the event of the applicant being offered a position of employment or engagement by the College;

- any offers of employment or engagement will be made subject to and conditional upon the College's receipt of a satisfactory Disclosure;
- the individual will not be permitted to work with children and/or vulnerable adults on an unsupervised basis until a satisfactory Disclosure is received by the College.

A failure to agree to a DBS check may result in the withdrawal of an offer of employment or engagement, or dismissal in the event that employment or an engagement has commenced.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Governors will have overall responsibility for:

- ensuring that the College has effective policies and procedures in place to protect children and vulnerable adults during their time at the College;
- ensuring that the College has effective policies and procedures in place to protect those who work with children and vulnerable adults;
- monitoring compliance with College policies and procedures.

The College Executive will:

- subject to the overarching responsibilities of the Board of Governors, be responsible for deciding College policy in relation to child protection issues and the use of DBS Disclosures within the College.

The Deputy Principal (Operations), Executive Projects Officer, Head of Human Resources, Head of the Junior RNCM, Deputy Head of the Junior RNCM and Head of Young Strings will:

- be responsible for child protection issues and cases and undertake the functions set out in section 3 of the College's Child Protection Policy and Procedure.

The DBS Lead Countersignatory (Head of Human Resources) and Countersignatories will:

- be the DBS' principal point of contact on all matters connected with DBS registration and use of the Disclosure service;
- be responsible for ensuring that all applications and Disclosure certificates are processed in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice;
- delivering annual refresher training to all countersignatories to ensure ongoing compliance with DBS Code of Practice
- be responsible for informing the DBS if any member of staff has been dismissed or removed from duties due to a safeguarding concern.

Human Resources staff will:

- develop and periodically review policies and procedures relating to recruitment and DBS Disclosures;

- monitor corporate practice to ensure compliance with, and evaluate the effectiveness, of the Disclosure & Barring Service Policy;
- provide advice and guidance to managers on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (and other relevant legislation) and DBS Disclosures;
- ensure that each member of staff has access to the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and that all new employees are issued with a copy.

Line Managers will:

- ensure that a risk assessment is undertaken for posts within their areas of responsibility which may involve contact with children and/or vulnerable adults;
- ensure that an appropriate DBS check is made as part of the recruitment process and submitted to the DBS before an applicant commences employment;
- ensure that employees do not work with children and/or vulnerable adults on an unsupervised basis until a satisfactory Disclosure is received by the College.

Employees will:

- ensure that they complete and submit to the College a completed DBS application form when required to do so by the College before they commence their employment;
- ensure that they do not work with children and/or vulnerable adults on an unsupervised basis until the College has confirmed to them that they have received a satisfactory Disclosure;
- read and comply with the College's Child Protection Policy and Procedure, a failure to comply could lead to disciplinary action;
- notify their line manager and the Head of Human Resources immediately should their circumstances change in relation to their criminal record.

6. Disclosure of a criminal conviction

A copy of the College's Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders is included at Appendix A. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from working with the College. The College will treat all applicants fairly and lawfully and will not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Where a criminal record is revealed in a Disclosure, the nature of the criminal record and its relevance to the post will be carefully considered. Any information revealed in a Disclosure that is likely to lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment or engagement will normally be discussed with the applicant before the offer is withdrawn.

In making a decision, the recruiting manager, with advice from Human Resources, will consider the relevant factors, including where appropriate and relevant the following:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- whether information short of a conviction for an offence is reliable;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;

- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or the other relevant matters; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

7. Portability of disclosure checks and DBS update service

Where applicants have subscribed to the DBS Update Service and hold a Disclosure relevant to their proposed position of employment or engagement with the College, the College will, with the applicant's consent, complete an online check to update their Disclosure. College staff will be encouraged to sign up to the DBS Update Service.

8. Overseas candidates

Where it is not possible for the College to obtain an appropriate check via the DBS (including, for example, where the successful candidate lives overseas or has spent a long period abroad) an appropriate check will be made with the relevant national agency where possible. This may be in addition to a DBS check depending on the time that the applicant has spent within the United Kingdom.

9. Re-checks

Upon the expiry of a three year period from the date of the original Disclosure, a re-check will be carried out. The three year renewal may be brought forward in the College's absolute discretion (including, for example, where concerns have arisen regarding an employee or where an employee moves to a post which involves an increased level of contact with children and/or vulnerable adults).

10. Payment of fees

Where the Disclosure is for a position within the Royal Northern College of Music the College will pay for the application.

11. Storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosure information

The College complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and the Data Protection Act 1998. A copy of the College's Policy Statement on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information is included at Appendix B.

12. Referrals to the disclosure and barring service

The College is under a legal duty to make referrals to the DBS in prescribed circumstances. The College will comply in full with its legal duty and relevant guidance issued by the DBS from time to time.

13. Related policies and procedures, and monitoring and review of policy

The College policies listed below are also relevant in seeking to ensure safe and fair recruitment at the College:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Policy on relationships involving College staff and students
- Policy on physical contact between College staff and students.

The College's Human Resources Committee shall be responsible for reviewing this policy to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

14. Appendices

A. Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

B. Policy Statement on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information

Policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure checking service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

The RNCM is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff and users of its services, in line with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy and in particular the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and regardless of their offending background.

This policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made available to all DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

A DBS check is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a DBS check is required, all application forms and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where a DBS check is to form part of the recruitment process, we require all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential, cover to the Head of Human Resources. This information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows the RNCM to ask questions about an applicant's entire criminal record we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that all those at the RNCM who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an appropriate, objective and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We make every subject of a DBS check aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the applicant before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from working with us.

This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of any offences.

Policy statement on the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information

- **General principles**

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for relevant positions, the Royal Northern College of Music complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information and this is our written policy on these matters.

- **Storage and Access**

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant's personal file and is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

- **Handling**

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it. The Head of Human Resources, (Lead Countersignatory) will be responsible for the handling of Disclosure information.

- **Usage**

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

- **Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

- **Disposal**

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure shredding. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.