



Bridging the Gap (Manchester)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy &

Recruitment of Offenders

Registered Charity Number: 1170952

This policy and guidance will be reviewed annually or if there are any changes in the related legislation or when an incident dictates. This will ensure that this document is current and fit for purpose.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **GDPR: Data Protection Policy**
- **Data Retention and Destruction Policy**

Date reviewed: 5th February 2023

Reviewed by: Michelle McHale & Lynda Mason

Next review due: 5th February 2024

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1. Equal opportunities

BTG is committed to social justice and is resolutely opposed to discrimination within society. It is committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, life-style, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor. No person requiring services from BTG will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds.

In employment BTG actively seeks to recruit with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and it welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates. BTG will select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation.

2. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checking

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, BTG undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice ([DBS code of practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)) and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

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

3. Safer Recruitment Process

Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, BTG encourages all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. This information should be sent under separate, confidential cover to the recruiter within BTG and it will be guaranteed that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows BTG to ask questions about a candidate's entire criminal record, BTG will only ask about "unspent" convictions, as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

BTG will ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of the circumstances of offences. BTG will also ensure that it has 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 separate discussion, BTG will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.

BTG makes everyone subject to a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and will make a copy available on request.

BTG undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a candidate from working with BTG. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the candidate's offences.

4. Handling Data

As an organisation using the DBS checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, BTG complies fully with the Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. BTG maintains a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

5. Storage and Access

Certificate information will be kept 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. Electronic disclosure information is held on a secure password protected system accessible only to those authorised to view it in the course of their duties.

6. Usage

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

7. Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, BTG will not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary, giving full consideration to the General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual before doing so.

Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

8. Disposal

Once the agreed retention period has elapsed, BTG will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, for example by cross shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g., waste bin or confidential waste sack).

For disposal of electronic certificate results, the information will be wiped from the system as and when required to do so.

Destruction of records will not proceed without being signed off by the relevant authorised persons (see section 10). A record containing what has been destroyed, when it was destroyed, method of destruction and the individuals who authorised the destruction will be maintained.

9. Umbrella Body

Thirtyone:eight will act as an ‘umbrella body’ in this process. Thirtyone:eight is an organisation that provides independent safeguarding advice and guidance, including safeguarding training and a DBS checking service.

BTG accepts that the Thirtyone:eight Disclosure Service, as our umbrella organisation, has a responsibility to ensure, as far as possible, that BTG complies with all the requirements in the DBS Code of Practice, along with other policy statements and other DBS procedures and processes.

BTG undertakes to keep Thirtyone:eight informed of any changes in the organisation, both in its personnel or practices, since these could materially affect BTG’s ability to work within the disclosure and barring expectations.

10. Authorisation of Certificate Disposal

The following persons are authorised to agree the destruction of DBS certificate information: -

Authorised Person	Position in BTG	Contact Details
Michelle McHale	Chair of Trustees & Safeguarding Officer	Tel. 07842 093922 Email: michellemchale@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk
Heidi Exell	Project Manager MSC Foodbank	Tel. 07561 680009 Email: projectmanager@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk
Helena Canavan	Project Manager More Than Food	Tel. 07933 611062 Email: helena@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk