



## **Bridging the Gap (Manchester)**

### **Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) & the Recruitment of Offenders Policy & Procedure**

**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 & Procedure**
- **Data Retention and Destruction Policy & Procedure**

Date reviewed: 2nd March 2025

Reviewed by: Michelle McHale & Lynda Mason

Next review due: 2nd March 2026

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## **1. Commitment to 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 the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and it welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates. Similarly, BTG will use the same approach when recruiting volunteers and trustees. BTG will select all candidates for interview, for both paid employment and trustee vacancies, based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation.

## **2. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checking**

BTG uses 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/or the Basic Processing Standards in order to ensure all applicants for positions are treated fairly. BTG undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any person where a criminal records check discloses a conviction or other information is revealed.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has been conducted and before deciding if it is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned to apply for a Standard or Enhanced DBS check. BTG will also satisfy itself that the role is legally eligible for one of these types of check. For those vacant posts where a DBS check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of a job offer being made.

## **3. Safer Recruitment Process**

BTG must ensure that they have access to all of the information available to them, in order to make safer recruitment decisions. For certain roles, checks will also include information held on the Children's and Adults' Barred List, alongside any information held by local police forces, that is considered relevant to the post applied for.

Access to Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS checks is only available to employers who are entitled by law to ask a candidate to reveal their full criminal history, including spent convictions (excluding [protected cautions and convictions that will be filtered from a criminal record check](#)). This is known as asking 'an exempted question'.

"An exempted question applies when the individual will be working in specific occupations or specified positions. These are covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975."

Where a DBS check is to form part of the recruitment process, BTG will only ask interview candidates to provide details of convictions and cautions that BTG are legally entitled to know about. BTG encourages all applicants called for an interview to provide details of criminal convictions as early as possible in the recruitment process. This information should be sent separately to the application form, labelled confidential and addressed to the named contact within the advertisement. BTG guarantees that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of our 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 those 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 a separate discussion, BTG will seek to undertake an open and measured discussion with the candidate on the subject of any criminal offences or other matters arising that might be relevant to the vacant position. Following a DBS check, failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of a conditional offer of employment or voluntary work.

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 offence(s).

#### **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 DBS Code of Practice

regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of DBS 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 of Certificates and Access**

The correct storage of DBS certificate information is important. The Code of Practice requires that the information revealed is considered only for the purpose for which it was obtained, and should be destroyed after a suitable period has passed - usually no longer than 6 months.

Certificate information will be uploaded to a secure cloud drive area, with restricted access limited to those who are entitled to see the information as part of their duties. Paper copies of certificates will be immediately returned to the candidate.

## **6. Disposal of Certificate Information**

Once the agreed storage and access period has elapsed, BTG will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately deleted from its cloud drive systems. Once deleted the information cannot be retrieved at a later date. .

Destruction of records will not proceed without being signed off by the relevant authorised persons (see section 8). A record will be maintained containing information about: -

- what has been destroyed
- when it was destroyed
- the method of destruction
- the individuals who authorised the destruction.

This practice will enable BTG to demonstrate that it has complied with this policy, DBS codes of practice and GDPR regulations.

## 7. Umbrella Body

Thirtyone:eight will act as an 'umbrella body' for BTG. 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.

## 8. Authorisation of Certificate Disposal

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

Authorised Person	Position in BTG	Contact Details
Michelle McHale	Chair of Trustees & Safeguarding Officer	Tel. 07842 093922 / 07598634476 Email: <a href="mailto:michellemchale@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk">michellemchale@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk</a>
Heidi Exell	Project Manager MSC Foodbank & Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Tel. 07561 680009 or 0161 226 3413 Email: <a href="mailto:projectmanager@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk">projectmanager@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk</a>
Helena Canavan	Project Manager More Than Food & Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Tel. 07933 611062 or 0161 226 3413 Email: <a href="mailto:helena@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk">helena@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk</a>
Lynda Mason	Trustee - Policy & Procedures	Tel. 07749836572 / 0161 881 9395 Email: <a href="mailto:lynda@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk">lynda@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk</a>

Jennifer Usiobo	Trustee - Data Protection Officer	Tel: 0161 226 3413 Email: <a href="mailto:jennifer@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk">jennifer@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk</a>
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