

# Applicants with a criminal record

## Policies and procedures

### Summary

Unlock is committed to best practice when recruiting people with a criminal record. It is essential that people do not face unfair discrimination in any role within the charity, whether paid or voluntary.

As an organisation that recruits volunteers, staff and trustees that have convictions, we have measures in place to consider the criminal record that applicants have, so that we can identify what, if any, concerns they raise. As a result, this policy explains how we use criminal records as part of our recruitment process.

### Eligibility

For each vacancy at Unlock, we will make it clear in the role description whether the position is covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (and so only requiring the disclosure of unspent offences) or whether it is exempt (and so requiring the disclosure of all convictions and cautions, even if they are spent, unless they are filtered).

### Peer positions

In keeping with the ethos of the organisation, some roles are defined as 'peer' positions. This means that it is a requirement to have a criminal record. In this context, we are looking for individuals who have received a conviction (or caution) for a criminal offence. Where this applies, it will be made clear in the vacancy details, and applicants will be expected to be willing to discuss this in more detail at interview as it forms part of the 'experience' we are looking for as part of the particular role.

### Application form



To ensure that we encourage applications from people with criminal records and shortlist applications purely on merit, we do not ask for criminal record details at the application stage. This is part of our commitment to the 'Ban the Box' campaign, which we encourage other employers to support.

However, where roles are defined as 'peer' positions, a positive declaration will need to be made in relation to a criminal record. This is to ensure that applicants are eligible for the role.

## Interview

Applicants will not be directly asked about their criminal record as part of the interview process. This is to ensure that individuals are able to put themselves across in the best possible light.

## Confidential self-disclosure

After the interview, shortlisting will take place, and we will decide who we wish to make a conditional offer to. At this stage, we will provide a self-disclosure form, which asks for criminal record details appropriate to the level of disclosure involved for the role. This should be returned as soon as possible. Information provided on this form will be treated as confidential and be used for recruitment purposes only.

## Consideration of disclosure

Any information disclosed on the self-disclosure form will be considered by the recruiting panel. If felt necessary, a discussion with the candidate may be arranged, particularly where there are concerns. Where there are no major concerns, a decision to proceed may be made at this stage. Any serious consideration of the information disclosed will result in a discussion being arranged with the candidate, preferably face-to-face. We refer to this as a 'disclosure discussion'.

## Disclosure discussion

This is for cases where it is deemed relevant (see above). This will include questions from us, as well as an opportunity to raise any information that the applicant feels is relevant. When considering criminal records, we will look at various factors, including whether the record is relevant to the role, the seriousness and the circumstances. This will be considered by the recruiting panel.

## Appointment

Appointment may be subject to the relevant level of criminal record check being undertaken. Where this applies, Unlock will cover this costs of this. Any discrepancies will initiate a review.

## Post-appointment

Those appointed will have their self-disclosure form held on their personnel file, which has restricted access. They will be informed of who knows about their convictions within the organisation – this will only be shared internally on a 'need to know' basis. We expect individuals to notify us of any changes in relation to their criminal convictions. This will initiate a review process.