

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) is committed to equality of opportunity for all job applicants and aims to select people for employment based on their skills, abilities, experience, knowledge and, where appropriate, qualifications and training.

DWFRS will consider ex-offenders for employment on their individual merits and take a risk-based approach to managing information found on Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

Following the inclusion of Fire and Rescue Authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975, all roles at DWFRS are eligible for a minimum of a Standard level of DBS check.

Depending on the nature and duties of the role, staff may be eligible for an Enhanced DBS check or an Enhanced with barred list(s) DBS check.

Each role is individually risk assessed and the job advertisement for the role will detail which level of check is required.

Where an applicant is already signed up to the DBS Update Service, DWFRS will, with their permission, carry out a status check on any current certificate.

Offences

Applicants will be asked to declare all cautions or convictions prior to employment, even if they are 'spent' under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 unless it is a protected or filtered offence.

A criminal record may not automatically bar an individual from appointment (it may in some cases). A positive disclosure risk assessment will be undertaken, and the Service will consider whether the conviction or caution makes them unsuitable for appointment to the role they have applied for.

Prior to any formal decision being reached about the individual, they will be offered the opportunity to discuss the wider context of the information contained on their DBS certificate. Failure to declare a conviction or caution may disqualify them from appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light during the course of their employment.

Protected or Filtered Offences

The amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) provides that when applying for certain jobs and activities, certain convictions and cautions are considered 'protected'. Filtering identifies and removes protected convictions and cautions so that they are not disclosed on a DBS certificate. This means that they do not need to be disclosed to employers, and if they are disclosed, employers cannot take them into account.

Guidance about whether a conviction or caution should be disclosed can be found on the Ministry of Justice website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974>.

Data Protection

DWFRS is committed to ensuring that all information provided about an applicant's criminal convictions, including any information released in disclosures, is used fairly and stored and handled appropriately and in accordance with data protection legislation. Data held on file about an individual's criminal convictions will be held only as long as it is required for employment purposes and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised person.