



Guidance on the portability of CRB Disclosure documents

We often receive enquiries about the portability of Disclosure certificates. This guidance is aimed at helping answer those questions and highlighting the risk factors that need to be taken into account when accepting a Disclosure from another registered body. It should be noted that whilst the CRB acknowledges that there is a need to avoid multiple applications from one person to the CRB for different roles they may have – either at work or in the community – the CRB no longer has its own portability service and does not recommend that Disclosure certificates over three months old are used for portability purposes.

What is portability?

Portability is the re-use of a Disclosure. For example, a Disclosure obtained for a position in one job, as a teacher or children services employee, may be re-used for a position in another voluntary post such as coaching. If a person is applying for two posts that require a Disclosure of the same level, at the same time, they should be able to avoid making two applications.

Where a person, either an employee or volunteer, whose post requires a CRB disclosure, is moving between clubs within the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA), the original Disclosure can be re-used if the applicant wishes and if the original Disclosure is less than two years old. However the club welfare officer (CWO) at the new club should contact the ARA's child protection officer (CPO) for confirmation that the Disclosure can be re-used. The CWO should first obtain the permission of the applicant in a letter of consent, an example of which is given below.

The overriding consideration must be the safety of those that the disclosure system is designed to protect, that is the children or vulnerable adults the applicant will be working with. However recruitment processes should not be more bureaucratic than necessary to ensure the safety of vulnerable people.

Limitations and risks

Portability carries some degree of risk. Before deciding whether to use portability the following factors must be taken into consideration:

- Disclosures carry no formal period of validity.
- The CRB does not recommend the portability of Disclosures over three months old.
- The information contained on a disclosure reflects only the information available as of the date of issue.
- Using portability does not constitute a fresh check.
- A person's criminal record or other relevant information may have changed since the issue of the previous disclosure.

Always see the original disclosure, not a photocopy. An original disclosure contains a number of security features to prevent tampering or forgery.

Can Disclosures be used more than once?

If a club requires a Disclosure as part of the recruitment decision and the applicant offers an old Disclosure as proof of their suitability the CWO should consider the following:

- The age of the Disclosure. The older it is the less reliance should be placed on it.
- Whether the Disclosure is of at least the same level as that required by the ARA. The ARA requires Enhanced Disclosures for those positions which have significant access to children or vulnerable adults.
- Whether all of the checks are required by the organisation covered by the old Disclosure. If the checks were not carried out, the words 'Not requested' will appear in the five boxes on the Disclosure. If they have been checked and no information has been found it will say 'None recorded'.

Limitations of Enhanced Disclosures

Enhanced Disclosures may contain 'approved' non-conviction information provided by the police from their local records. In the majority of these cases the CRB will print any information on the Disclosure that is sent to the applicant and the registered body in the box entitled 'Other relevant information disclosed at the chief police officer(s) discretion'. However occasionally the chief police officer may wish to withhold this information from the applicant's Disclosure. The registered body's copy will contain a reference to a letter sent under separate cover which will contain details of this information.

If you decide to accept the applicant's copy you will not know if any information was revealed to the registered body in a separate letter. You will therefore need to check with the previous registered body.

Contacting the previous registered body

If an applicant presents you with an Enhanced Disclosure you may contact the registered body named on the front page of the disclosure. However, before doing so you must obtain written consent from the individual. A suggested form of words is given below:

I, [name of applicant], having been offered a position as [title of position] at [name of club] by [CWO], consent to [person who signed original disclosure application] confirming such details relating to the Disclosure issued to me by the CRB on [date of issue], [reference number] with [CWO] as may be necessary to assist with an assessment of my suitability for the position.

Then:

- Ask the applicant to sign a consent statement, a copy of which should be sent/faxed to the previous registered body.
- Ask the previous registered body to confirm the content of the Disclosure.
- Ask the previous registered body whether the police supplied any additional information under separate cover.

The previous registered body should:

- Satisfy itself that the request is genuine.
- Confirm whether or not the information provided by the person making the enquiry reflects that on the previous registered body's Disclosure.
- Only state if the police did or did not supply additional information. They must not reveal the content of that information to you. This would be a criminal offence.
- Ensure that the candidate is not present during any discussion on this matter.
- Ensure they are not made aware of the answer to the question.

In the unlikely event that additional information was sent to the previous registered body, a fresh application must be made to the CRB through the ARA. This will give the police the opportunity to share that information with the ARA.

When recruiting new volunteers or employees you should ensure that you do not rely on the CRB Disclosure as your only vetting procedure. A written or verbal reference may tell you much more about a person's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.

Much of this information is contained in a more general form on the CRB website: www.disclosure.gov.uk