

POWYS CHALLENGE

Registered Charity Number 1091494 Company No: 4350654

CRIMINAL RECORDS

POLICY STATEMENT-POWYS CHALLENGE

Powys Challenge is committed to the principle that as an employer and a provider of services, it should provide equal opportunities to all members of the community. In particular, it is recognised that there is a responsibility not to discriminate unfairly against ex-offenders.

Ex-offenders have especially valuable experiences to draw on, and volunteering with Powys Challenge can create opportunities often denied to people with a criminal record.

It is also recognised that some of the client group with whom Powys Challenge works may be vulnerable. Since the primary concern must be the welfare of the offenders and young people for whom a service is provided, it would therefore not be appropriate for Powys Challenge to accept potential volunteers with certain convictions.

Criminal Record Checks.

- All volunteers will be asked to declare and discuss any previous criminal convictions at first interview.
- A Criminal Record check will be carried out on each prospective volunteer.
- Consent must be given by the potential volunteer for the check to be carried out.

If after the check has been completed, it becomes apparent that the potential volunteer has not disclosed a previous conviction, the Project Manager must re-interview the volunteer to discuss fully why disclosure did not take place. The Project Manager must also discuss the issue with the Chief Officer.

Non-disclosure will normally result in the volunteer being rejected unless the Chief Officer and Project Manager agree that the potential volunteer's reason for non-disclosure is acceptable.

Acceptance of volunteers with previous criminal convictions.

The following guidelines must be observed in relation to volunteer recruitment and selection:

1. An individual with any previous conviction for any Schedule 1 offence must be brought to the attention of the Chief Officer. Such individuals are likely to be precluded from volunteering with Powys Challenge.
2. An individual with a previous conviction for any *other* offence can normally only be recruited as a volunteer provided that at least one year has elapsed since completion of any sentence, other disposal, licence or supervision related to that offence. However, where the Chief Officer has reason to believe that earlier recruitment may be of benefit, s/he may allow a shorter time to lapse after consultation with one or more Trustees.
3. An individual with a previous conviction for a drug-related offence, violent offence, or any sexual offence (except Schedule 1) may be recruited as a volunteer, in accordance with point 2 above, subject to prior approval by the Chief Officer (i.e. before accepting the volunteer onto training the Project Manager must consult with the Chief Officer, giving full details of offences disclosed.)

Powys Challenge Project Managers are reminded that in all cases they have discretion to reject potential volunteers, based on their evaluation at first interview and during the introductory training course. Where there is any doubt as to how the individual's previous offending will affect his/her suitability as a volunteer, the individual should not be accepted as a Powys Challenge volunteer. However, it should be stressed that, with the exception of points 1-3 above, no-one should be rejected *only* on the basis of a previous conviction.

Confidentiality

Information in relation to previous criminal convictions elicited through criminal record checks will be stored by Powys Challenge at the head office. Such information will be stored separately from any volunteer files and will be held in a secure cabinet.

Only Powys Challenge staff and the relevant agency staff will have access to/knowledge of this information.

All parties involved in Powys Challenge - volunteers, agencies, and service users must be made aware of this policy statement.