

## **Southampton Voluntary Services (SVS)**

### **Policy on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures & Disclosure Information**

#### **General Principles**

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, SVS complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

#### **Storage and Access**

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant's personnel file and is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. However, we may keep a record on the applicant's personnel file of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested and the unique reference number of the Disclosure.

#### **Handling**

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

#### **Usage**

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

#### **Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months we will consult the CRB about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

#### **Disposal**

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. Whilst awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We

will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

### **Re-checking**

Within a three year period all existing staff and volunteers that require a CRB will be required to submit a new CRB application, this is to ensure that SVS is complying with our duty to protect our clients and ensuring that positions of trust remain. At this time SVS complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information as mentioned previously.

Should information change since the previous disclosure and the employee has not informed the organisation of these changes then the disclosure will form evidence as part of an investigation.

### **Acting as an Umbrella Body**

Before acting as an Umbrella Body (one which countersigns applications and receives Disclosure information on behalf of other employers or recruiting organisations), we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that they can comply fully with the CRB Code of Practice. We will also take all reasonable steps to satisfy ourselves that they will handle use, store, retain and dispose of Disclosure information in full compliance with the CRB Code and in full accordance with this policy. We will also ensure that any body or individual, at whose request applications for Disclosure are countersigned, has such a written policy and, if necessary, will provide a model policy for that body or individual to use or adapt for this purpose.