



POLICY ON THE SECURE HANDLING, USE, STORAGE, RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF DISCLOSURE INFORMATION (England & Wales)

General Principles

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the Field Studies Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and destruction of certificates and certificate 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 certificate information and this written policy is available to those who wish to see it on request.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act (1997), certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of those to whom FSC has revealed certificate information and it is a criminal offence for FSC to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

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

Storage and Access

Certificate information will be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep certificate information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS 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 the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Destruction

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate 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 certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate. However, notwithstanding the above, we will keep a record of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificate and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

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