

RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

1. Policy Statement

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions of trust, which may fall within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order, Godalming Town Council uses criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). The Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and the Home Office Revised Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service Registered Persons (November 2015) pursuant to section 122(2) of the Police Act 1997.

Godalming Town Council undertakes to treat all applicants fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS application or criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

2. Commitment to Fairness and Equality

The Council is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, and service users, regardless of:

- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins)
- Sex
- gender reassignment
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- responsibilities for dependents
- age
- physical/mental disability
- physical characteristics
- offending background.

The Council actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential. It welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. All candidates are selected for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

3. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

- A DBS application is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.
- Where a criminal record check is required, all application forms, job adverts, recruitment briefs, and discussions will clearly indicate that a DBS check will be requested in the event of an offer of employment.
- The Council can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that it is legally entitled to know about and that are not protected.
- Unless the nature of the position allows otherwise, only "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 will be asked about.

4. Handling of Information

- Applicants are encouraged to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage of the recruitment process.
- Information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- An open and measured discussion will always take place regarding any offences or other matters relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information directly relevant to the position could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- The Council undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing any conditional offer of employment.

5. Training and Support

The Council will ensure that:

- appropriate professional support is provided for the recruitment process to assess the relevance and circumstances of offences; and
- those involved in recruitment receive guidance and training on the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, including the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

6. DBS Code of Practice

Every subject of a DBS check will be made aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice, and a copy will be made available on request.

7. General Principle

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an individual from working with the Council. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.