



British Rowing – Changes to Criminal Records/Barred Lists Check Process from 29th May 2013

On 23rd May 2013, the DBS announced the date of 17th June 2013 for the launching of the Applicant Only Service.

At present, when a Criminal Records/Barred Lists check is completed, two certificates are issued: one for the applicant and one for British Rowing as the Registered Body. From 17th June 2013, DBS will only issue a disclosure to the applicant. British Rowing will no longer receive a copy.

Unlike previous deadlines given by the DBS, on this occasion, the changes will apply to all applications still being processed on 17th June 2013. This has significant implications for the way British Rowing manages DBS disclosures. **As a consequence, and with sincere regret, we are suspending our acceptance of all paper applications for Criminal Records/Barred Lists checks through British Rowing from 6th June 2013, as we transition to the new system outlined below. Correctly and fully completed forms received on or before that date will be submitted in the normal way. Incorrect or incomplete applications will be returned to the relevant CWO with a request for a new online application to be initiated.**

Although all National Governing Bodies had been briefed to expect this announcement during 'Spring' and more recently 'Late Summer', the notice period now given by the DBS represents a timescale far shorter not only than we have ever received for previous changes to the system but also than all previously available information and guidance has indicated.

In addition, on 29th May 2013, we were notified that - in response to changes in legislation introduced on the same day - the DBS will be removing certain specified old and minor offences from criminal record certificates issued from this date (see link below). We have been told that Question 55 on the old paper application forms (*'Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or received a caution, reprimand or warning?'*) should now be read by applicants as: 'Do you have any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings?'

In practice, this means that some information that would have showed up previously on a Disclosure will no longer be present. It also has implications for the way our self-disclosure form WG 2.6 (currently being updated) is worded, and throws even greater emphasis on the need for clubs to follow robust recruitment procedures as outlined in the British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy.

Operational Issues

The sustained increase in demand for CRB/DBS application forms since summer 2012 has contributed to considerably extended processing times. Another key factor has been the high proportion of those forms that come back to us which are either incomplete or incorrectly filled out (typically well over 50%), all of which require administrative time to address before they can be submitted to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Online Applications

In order to ensure ongoing compliance with changing legislative and DBS requirements and to provide a quicker and more efficient service to members, British Rowing had already begun the move towards an online application system through TMG CRB, one of the largest and most experienced Criminal Records checks organisations, who also work with a number of other sports governing bodies.

The cost of applications for eligible volunteers who are British Rowing members will be met by British Rowing and will be just under £10.00. Those volunteers not in possession of a current membership will be required to pay for their application, and the rate (including handling fee) will be just over £10.00 (tbc).

Applications for individuals in paid employment will, as now, be fully chargeable to the individual (currently £44), plus TMG administrative charges.

On the basis of the situation as we knew it until last week, we had been working to the premise that British Rowing's online DBS application facility would be comfortably in place and all stakeholders briefed in advance of the Applicant Only Service going live in late summer or early autumn.

Despite the unexpectedly close launch date, I am pleased to report that TMG CRB has indicated that we will be able to move over to a simple online application service within the next week to 10 days. This will form part of a phased introduction over the coming months, and further information about the new process will be passed on to CWOs as it becomes available.

This is a new venture for all of us in Rowing, and inevitably it is likely to take some time to bed in. However, we will update clubs, welfare officers and applicants by all means at our disposal to ensure that the transition occurs as smoothly as possible, as well as ensuring that advice and guidance on the new arrangements are available by phone and e-mail.

Interim Measures

We are working on a new version of WG 2.6 which we hope will go live on the British Rowing website early next week. WG 2.6 self-declaration forms which were printed out and completed before 29th May will continue to be accepted in the normal way, although we will no longer issue paper DBS application forms to CWOs. Instead, once our online system goes live, we will e-mail CWOs with instructions, a template ID checklist, and a confidential access code to enable eligible individuals to make an online application. For the time being, CWOs will still be required to submit the paper checklist of ID documentation to British Rowing, as previously.

We will do our utmost to ensure that correctly completed application forms already received at Hammersmith by 6th June 2013 are submitted and processed before 17th June 2013.

Any individual who has used a paper application form, and whose certificate is issued on or after 17th June 2013 will be required to send it in to the Lead Safeguarding Officer at British Rowing for assessment. All individuals who have submitted incomplete/incorrect applications or whose requests for application forms have yet to be processed will be asked to make an online application once our web based service is in place.

In addition to Criminal Records/Barred Lists checks for those whom clubs plan to deploy in Regulated Activity (RA), all clubs should continue to follow the established recruitment procedures for all adults in roles of responsibility with children outlined in Section 5 of the British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy. Further guidance on safe recruitment is available via the Child Protection in Sport (CPSU) website (link below).

Prior to receipt of the DBS Enhanced Disclosure and/or the Barred List Check, an individual whose position requires it may be permitted to undertake a role which is supervised at all times by another individual who holds the necessary DBS clearance, for a maximum period of 3 months.

Portability

We have known for some time that the Government planned to introduce an Update Service for applicants. Essentially, the rationale for this is that will allow individuals, if they choose to subscribe to it and pay a small fee (anticipated to be free for volunteers), to apply for a criminal record check once and then, if they need a similar sort of check again, to reuse their existing certificate for new and existing organisations, with the organisations being able to check online to see if there have been any changes to the certificate. This would avoid many unnecessary repeat applications.

It remains to be decided whether we will accept portability from other organisations or not, and the key factor to be considered is the risk associated with 100% reliance on another organisation's identity verification process. We will continue seek guidance from CPSU, SRA and TMG CRB on this and on any other matters pertaining to the rigour and relevance of Disclosure and Barring Service Checks for those working with children and/or Adults at Risk in rowing.

Further updates will be communicated by e-mail and via the British Rowing website.

Laura Fieldman
Lead Safeguarding Officer
British Rowing

31st May 2013

Links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dbs-filter-certain-old-and-minor-cautions-and-convictions-reprimands-and-warnings-from-criminal-record-certificates>

<http://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/welfare/safeguarding-and-protecting-children-policy>

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/news-events/2013/may/disclosure-and-barring-service-announces-launch-date-for-a-number-of-changes/>

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2013/safe-recruitment-and-selection-procedures/>