

Ex-offenders policy

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working for Citizens Advice in West Sussex (North, South, East) (CAWS) – much will depend on the type of job you have applied for and the background and circumstances of your offence(s).

However, our national policy is that we will not take on anyone with a conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult, regardless of when the offence took place

The Citizens Advice service is committed to the promotion and delivery of equal opportunities to clients and to volunteers and paid staff. It accepts that equal treatment of persons from discriminated against groups is insufficient to achieving equal opportunities and that positive action is also required. The service is therefore committed to positive action as a means of removing barriers to services and employment opportunities for those from discriminated against groups.

CAWS therefore undertakes to treat all applicants for positions within the bureau fairly. CAWS undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against volunteers or paid staff who voluntarily reveal that they have a criminal conviction. Equally, we will not discriminate unfairly against volunteers or paid staff where a Disclosure and Barring Service check reveals a criminal conviction or other information about offences.

Candidates for posts within the bureau will be informed that we actively promote equality of opportunity for all those with the right mix of talent, skills, experience and potential. We welcome applications from any part of our community, including from people with criminal records. Skills, qualifications and experience alone will be the basis for selection for interview. All applicants for posts that require Disclosure will be assured of this in the job information pack.

A Disclosure will be requested for a post only after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that it is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. National policy for the service is that the risks posed by staff whose work is targeted at vulnerable clients necessitates an Enhanced DBS check. For those positions where a Disclosure is appropriate, recruitment literature will contain a statement that a Disclosure would be requested in the event of appointment.

We encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate cover, marked as private and confidential to a designated person within CAWS and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Should a criminal record be revealed, a decision whether or not to maintain employment must have regard to the nature of the crime, when it was committed, the client group involved and the reputation of the service.

Anyone who applies to work within CAWS as a volunteer, or in a paid position, will be asked to disclose details of unspent convictions during the recruitment process; candidates must not withhold information about unspent convictions.

At interview or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal

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information that is directly relevant to the position could lead to a withdrawal of an offer of employment or volunteering opportunity.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure, or which is revealed by the individual, with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment or volunteering opportunity.