WORKING WITH CHILDREN

WALK-ONS AND SUPPORTING ARTISTS ("SAs") & BASIC DISCLOSURE CHECKS Q & A

This Q & A document is intended to explain how the pan-industry approach to background checks will affect Supporting Artists ("SAs") working on productions involving children and young persons under the age of 18. This pan-industry approach has been adopted by BBC, Channel 4, Channel 5, ITV, Sky, STV, S4C and Pact.

1. What will be expected of SAs?

We are asking agencies who supply SAs to advise all of the SAs on their books that they need to have a basic criminal record check in the form of a basic disclosure check for those artists wishing to work on any film or programme commissioned by the public service broadcasters or Sky and that involve children and young persons.

Please note it is possible for young persons over the age of 16 to obtain basic disclosure checks and they will be expected to do so.

Additional briefings and information will be required for certain productions.

2. What do you mean by programmes or films that involve children and young persons?

Any programme or film that might engage a child and/or young person at some stage during the production in speaking or non-speaking roles. This includes productions which could have under 18s on set at any time as a result of last-minute changes to the schedule.

3. What is a basic disclosure certificate?

A basic disclosure certificate is a document containing impartial and confidential criminal history information held by the police that can be used to make safer recruitment decisions.

The basic disclosure document will provide details of any unspent convictions that an individual may have.

4. Why do Supporting Artists need to obtain a basic disclosure certificate?

All broadcasters and producers have extremely high standards when it comes to safeguarding and child protection, and the physical and emotional welfare of every child involved in their productions is of the absolute highest importance.

Broadcasters and producers are looking for the check to seek external assurance that the SAs they recruit to work on programmes or films that involve under 18s have no unspent convictions for offences contained within the Sexual Offences Act 2003. All children working on productions are chaperoned at all times by a licensed chaperone and/or a parent/guardian. However, the check will

reveal if any SAs have any unspent convictions that should preclude them from working on a production involving children, whether or not the children are chaperoned.

In addition, broadcasters will have their own protocols, guidelines, and codes of conduct, that explain to producers the conduct and standards required of all individuals (both on and off screen) working on productions involving children.

5. How do I apply for a basic disclosure check?

An application for a basic disclosure certificate should be sent to one of the following:

If you live or work in	
England and Wales	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basic-checks
Scotland	https://www.mygov.scot/basic-disclosure/apply-for-basic-disclosure/
Northern Ireland	https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-online-basic-check

You do not need to supply the address of any broadcaster or producer in this process as it is your agent that will check the certificate that you have obtained.

6. What information is needed to complete the application process?

The government sites (set out in Section 5) provide clear instructions.

Information likely to be required is:

- Your home address details for past 5 years.
- National Insurance number
- ID containing your birth date (e.g. passport, driving licence)
- ID containing your current address (e.g. utility bill, bank statement)

7. What is the cost of a certificate? How long does it take to issue a certificate?

Currently a certificate costs as follows

England and Wales:	Disclosure and Barring Service	£25
Scotland:	Disclosure Scotland	£25
Northern Ireland:	AccessNI	£26

It usually takes no more than 14 days for a certificate to be issued.

8. How often do I need to provide a certificate?

A new certificate will need to be provided every 18 months. However, if within that period you are convicted of an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 your agent will need to be informed of this by you as they will not be able to supply your services to a production involving children. You will also notice that wording will be included in your chits confirming that no sexual offence has been committed since the Basic Disclosure certificate was obtained, such as:

"I confirm I do not have any unspent convictions for sexual offences as contained within the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and I have never been subject to any disciplinary action or sanction relating to vulnerable groups."

9. Who do I show the basic disclosure certificate to?

You show the certificate to your agent.

You may be asked to supply or show this certificate to a production company or a broadcaster if you wish to be put forward for the role.

10. What is the difference between the basic disclosure check and standard and enhanced checks (commonly referred to as DBS, or formerly CRB, checks)?

The basic disclosure check only provides details of unspent convictions. Individuals and the self-employed are able to apply for this certificate, whilst engagers are not able to submit an application for a basic check.

Standard and enhanced checks provide details of both unspent and spent convictions and only apply to certain job categories (e.g. teacher or healthcare professional) or where an individual carries out what is defined as a "regulated activity" with a child or adult at risk. As SAs are neither listed within the specified job categories nor normally involved in what is described as a "regulated activity", they are unlikely to be eligible for these checks.

11. Are other contributors or crew checked?

Where contributors or crew are eligible for a DBS/PVG check then this is undertaken. If they are not eligible for such checks, but will be working with under 18 year olds in a supervised capacity, then they will be required to complete a self-declaration form which can help to provide a degree of assurance in relation to an individual's criminal history. This form is used in specific circumstances and typically where we have a direct contractual relationship with those individuals.

12. What happens if a Supporting Artist does not obtain a basic disclosure certificate?

If an SA would prefer not to obtain or disclose their basic disclosure certificate they will still be able to work on productions that do not involve children.

13. What if a Supporting Artist already has a criminal background check such as an enhanced DBS check?

With the individual's consent all criminal background checks, including basic, standard and enhanced, are valid from the date of issue for 18 months for this purpose. (N.B the standard and enhanced checks are only valid for 18 months from issue because producers are not able to apply for these checks for SA work. Therefore, producers are not notified of any changes to the SAs status unlike the employers who applied for the standard or enhanced check. The standard and enhanced checks are – like the basic check – a snapshot of the SAs status at one point in time.

14. Can I use the same check if I work for different agents/agencies?

Yes.

15. What additional broadcaster policies are there?

BBC

Child Protection Policy

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/corporate2/insidethebbc/howwework/policiesandguidelines/child_protection.html

Code of Conduct

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/corporate2/insidethebbc/howwework/policiesandguidelines/child_protection.html#heading-child-protection-code-of-conduct

Channel 4

Working and Filming with Under 18s guidelines

- https://www.channel4.com/producers-handbook/c4-guidelines/working-and-filming-with-under-18s-guidelines

ITV

- http://www.itv.com/commissioning/guidelines/compliance-guidelines

Sky

- https://www.skygroup.sky/corporate/about-sky/production

S4C

- http://www.s4c.cymru/media/media_assets/S4C-Child-Protection-Policy.pdf