DBS guide for members

While we understand that it is not legally necessary for most of our members to have a DBS check when visiting schools, feedback suggests that some local authorities are still insisting schools ask authors for a DBS check.

For this reason, we have partnered with a company called Credence, who provide a service for all regions – England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – to enable members to apply for DBS checks. Each region has different application forms and prices.

Eventually, we would like to make the service available to all members, but we soft launching the scheme with CWIG members.

In setting up this system we were advised that in most circumstances an enhanced DBS check will be required, given the nature of requests being to authors visiting schools.

Eligibility – Enhanced Criminal Checks

Eligibility for enhanced criminal record checks are the same across all 3 government agencies.

An Enhanced Criminal Record Check is used for posts that include anyone working in a Regulated Activity with a Regulated Activity provider, as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. Regulated Activity primarily falls into the following categories: provision of healthcare, social care, or teaching/guidance/instruction.

Access to process an enhanced criminal record check with barred lists means that the role must also meet frequency criteria (seeing the same set of children 3 or more times per month).

For SoA members, the eligibility is met where they are providing teaching/guidance/instruction to children on an infrequent basis.

The DBS host a very helpful eligibility tool which can help guiding eligibility judgements: https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check

Some important points:

Any issues must be taken up with Credence. Candidates are welcome to call their office for help, on 01732 748900, or email Support@credence.co.uk or teamb@credence.co.uk.

- Once the application is in the system, the SoA can’t do anything.
- If an application fails, the SoA cannot help with any appeals.

Each region has a different name for the check and a different system and it’s vital that you follow the application instruction for each region closely.
Pricing:

- England and Wales - Enhanced DBS (with digital ID) = £50.50
- Scotland - PVG New Member = £71.00
- Northern Ireland - Enhanced AccessNI = £48.00

Update service

A DBS check has no official expiry date. It's up to the person commissioning you to decide if a new check is needed. If you have signed up for the DBS Update Service, commissioners can check your certificate is up to date online. Further details can be found here.

The Update Service is an online subscription that allows you to keep your standard or enhanced certificates up-to-date, and allows employers to check a certificate online. You can join the Update Service as soon as you have your application form reference number and must do so no later than 30 days after receipt of your certificate. https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service

How to make an application:

First you have to tell us you want to apply for a DBS check by emailing info@societyofauthors.org and you will need to provide the following:

The level of check. Is it:

Northern Ireland: Enhanced AccessNI,
Scotland: PVG new Member,
England & Wales: Enhanced DBS

Then we will need:

Title
First name
Middle name (if any)
Surname
Phone number (can be home or mobile)
Email (you must use the same email address throughout the process)

For England and Wales only, we will need you to also state:

Whether you be working with adults, children or adults and children

A description of your role: e.g., Facilitator

Once we receive the request, we register the application with Credence who will then send an email to you with the invitation to complete the Credence application form.

You must then log into the system and complete the required information. Once completed, the Credence finance department will email you with an invoice to pay. Once this has been paid,
Credence will initiate the criminal checks. This will involve receiving emails with information about whatever is required in the different regions.

If the validation is successful, Credence will then proceed to submit the case through to the DBS for processing. If the validation is unsuccessful – for example, they cannot digitally link you to the home address provided, or if there is insufficient documentation for the digital ID – you will need to revert back to an in-person verification of the documents.

Finally, if you need to ask any questions prior to starting an application, either email info@societyofauthors.org or call 020 3880 2230 and ask for Peter Kennedy (Head of Member Services).

For more information, visit https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about#dbs-checks