

## **VOLUNTEER AND STAFF CHECKS POLICY**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the verification checks required by Maldon Neighbourhood Centre staff and volunteers to manage the risk of criminal activity.

### **Scope**

This policy and its provisions cover Maldon Neighbourhood Centre staff and volunteers, including MNC's volunteer Committee of Management members, prior to commencement and during the term of their employment.

### **Definitions**

Volunteers freely give their time on a regular and frequent basis, have completed a Volunteer Registration form and are provided a clear description of their volunteer role.

### **Policy**

Maldon Neighbourhood Centre requires all volunteers and staff to undergo checks pertaining to their role to manage the risk of criminal activity. Maldon Neighbourhood Centre expects staff and volunteers to disclose any criminal incidents to the Centre Coordinator in a timely manner.

### **Signed Code of conduct**

All staff and volunteers are required to read and agree to the MNC Code of Conduct.

### **Police Checks**

MNC requires a national police check (NPC) to be provided for commencing staff and volunteers, with a regular NPC to be conducted every three years.

Evidence of the Police Check can be provided in one of three ways:

- Original (and unaltered) document.
- Document received via email can be forwarded to MNC.
- consent for MNC to conduct a NPC

MNC pays the cost of the NPC for all employees and volunteers.

### **Assessing a Person's Criminal History**

A person is automatically unsuitable to be employed as a staff member/volunteer where they have a history of offence/s, including pending charges in the following categories:

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- any sexual offence of a violent or exploitative nature, or
- any offence involving harm or exploitation of vulnerable people, or
- any serious offence involving the use of violence, or
- any serious assault

This includes outstanding charges, warrants, court orders, and offences, findings of guilt, with or without conviction (including suspended sentences).

Where the conviction is for some other offence, MNC will determine on an individual basis whether the individual is suitable to be an employee.

MNC recognises that some staff or volunteers may have had offences that would not pose a risk to participants or to the reputation of MNC. MNC will undertake a risk assessment of each of the convictions or charges showing on the NPC.

Where a person has been convicted of a criminal offence and that conviction does not attract automatic preclusion from being an employee, in deciding whether to provide employment to the person due the potential risk to the customer, MNC will give consideration to the following risk factors:

- the relevance of the offence to the role
- the age of the person at the time the offence was committed
- how long ago the offence was committed
- where there have been repeat offences
- whether there was a conviction recorded
- if the offence is a suspended sentence
- the type of customers that the person will need to interact with, and
- any other extenuating circumstances.

It is not unlawful to refuse employment on the basis of a conviction or other disclosable outcomes as stated above.

If the person's risk assessment is low, the person may be suitable to become a staff member or volunteer of MNC. The Centre Coordinator will then make contact with the person and discuss the decision.

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The National Police Certificate will be approved where it either reveals no convictions, or the convictions recorded have been considered by MNC in accordance with this policy and MNC has determined that the offence(s) to which the conviction(s) relate do not prevent the person from working with customers known through MNC.

### **Data Security, Record Keeping, Use and Disclosure, Collection and Access**

Organisations may only keep documents relating to National Police Checks for a maximum of 1 year. The NPC remains the property of the individual referred to in the certificate. Only MNC Coordinator, and Committee of management where appropriate, will have access to this information.

### **Reference Checks**

All potential staff are required to provide a minimum of 2 referee checks for MNC to contact and determine suitability.

### **Working with Children Checks**

The Working with Children Check is a screening process for assessing or re-assessing people who work with or care for children in Victoria. It is a requirement of MNC that all staff or volunteers working with or in contact with children have a current, valid WWCC, this includes childcare volunteers, reception volunteers, Committee of Management members listed on the Licence and community bus drivers. Working with children's checks are free for all volunteers. Employees cover the cost of their own WWCC.

### **Other checks and ID requests**

Other requests maybe made of employees and volunteers (including MNC's volunteer committee of management members) including, but not limited to:

- Drivers Licence (for community bus drivers)
- 5 year Driver History Check (for community bus drivers)
- Completed National Personal Insolvency check (CoM member)
- ASIC Personal Name Extract (CoM member)
- other items outlined on the current induction checklist for the relevant MNC program.

### **Committee of Management Members**

MNC Committee of Management members are required to undergo a series of checks to ensure they are fit a proper to hold office on the MNC Committee of Management. While a person's nomination maybe accepted prior to the checks being completed this is an in principle acceptance only pending the outcome of the checks.

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When current Committee of Management members are not compliant, the Committee will follow the Constitution and relevant MNC policies to ensure MNC Committee members become compliant with their requirements.

If any of the checks above provide a result which is not suitable for membership of the MNC Committee of Management, the Chair of the MNC Committee of Management will discuss the issue with the Committee member in confidence to resolve a suitable outcome (If the issue involves the Chair of the MNC Committee of Management the Vice Chair will hold the conversation with the Chair). The member who is not compliant will have the right to have the issue discussed by the full Committee of Management as per the Constitution, if requested.

**Related Documents:**

Staff Induction kit

Volunteer Induction kit

Committee of Management Office Bearer Policy

Code of Conduct

OCC Qualified Staff Employment Policy

CoM Appointment letter

CCS Management Policy and Procedure