



Home Office

Application processes for foreign national criminality information

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. I am a foreign national / UK national who has spent time abroad. My prospective employer in the UK is asking for a criminal record check for my time spent abroad. Who should I contact?

Details of how to obtain such a check from the relevant authorities abroad are available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

If the country concerned is not listed, please contact the relevant embassy or consulate for further details. Contact details can be found online at::

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-embassies-in-the-uk>

2. I am a UK national who needs to get a police certificate for visa application purposes? Who should I contact?

The ACPO Criminal Records Office (ACRO) issues Police Certificates to people who want to emigrate or have been required to produce a Police Certificate (sometimes known as a “Certificate of Good Conduct”) by an Embassy, High Commission or Consulate for other purposes.

The certificate details whether or not the applicant has a criminal record in the United Kingdom and is required as part of the visa process by the respective High Commission or Embassy.

If you require a police certificate from the UK for Visa purposes, you will need to contact the ACPO Criminal Records Office at your earliest convenience.

- Call: 0845 60 13 999 (International Callers: 0044 1962 871 111)
- Email: customer.services@acro.pnn.police.uk .
- Further details can be found at http://www.acro.police.uk/police_certificates.aspx

3. I am about to start work as a volunteer / teacher at a nursery / school abroad. They have asked for a police certificate. How do I get this?

If you are aiming to work with children outside of the UK, it may be possible to acquire an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC).

You can use the ICPC when you are applying to work in a school or organisation outside of the UK where you will be in regular contact with children. The ICPC will detail your criminal record history from the UK for the employer so that they can assess your suitability.

Before submitting your application, you should check that your employer will accept the ICPC. Some overseas employers use other UK disclosure services such as the [Disclosure & Barring Service](#) (DBS - formerly the CRB) or [Disclosure Scotland](#), whilst others are unable to access these services so will need to use the ICPC.

The ICPC is a criminal records check against police and intelligence databases in the UK that would reveal any convictions or reasons as to why someone should not work with children. It is similar to the DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check that is required for anyone working professionally with children in England and Wales. An organisation can request that existing employees, or an applicant during the recruitment process, obtains an ICPC.

The certificate contains your complete conviction history, as recorded on police central records, including 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions. Additionally, the certificate contains criminal conviction information about offences committed in other foreign countries where such information has been disclosed to the UK through existing exchange mechanisms.

More information and details about the application process can be found at:

<http://www.ceop.police.uk/ICPC/>

and also at:

<http://www.acro.police.uk/ICPC/>

4. I'm a UK Citizen starting a new job abroad and my overseas employer has asked for a UK police clearance check. Where do I go for this?

Currently the only way that an individual can obtain a formal criminal record check on themselves is by way of a Basic Disclosure which details any unspent convictions that may be recorded against them, as the ACRO Police Certificate can only be used for visa purposes and for submission to the relevant Embassy, High Commission, Consulate or other organisation. At present Basic Disclosures are only issued by AccessNI in Northern Ireland and Disclosure Scotland. Details on how to obtain these checks can be found using the following links:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni>

<http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/apply/>

You can also make a Subject Access Request to obtain a copy of information held about you, under the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Information on this process can be found using this link: http://www.acro.police.uk/subject_access.aspx

However you will need to verify whether your prospective employers will be content to accept the results of such a request for their purposes.

5. What are the statutory requirements for carrying out checks on foreign nationals and UK nationals who have spent time abroad?

Although there has been no statutory requirement for organisations to carry out such checks it is widely considered best practice to do so. In addition, the Department for Education has published guidance that sets out the responsibilities of all local authorities, schools and further education (FE) colleges in England to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It sets out recruitment best practice, some underpinned by legislation, for the school, local authority, and FE education sectors. It can be found at the following link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213145/safeguarding-children-safer-recruitment>

The relevant material relating to overseas employees can be found at paragraph 4.65: "Staff Who Have Lived Outside The United Kingdom".

(NB: This guidance is currently under review and was the subject of consultation during 2013. This review can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education>)

6. Other useful links

ACPO Criminal Records Office:

<http://www.acro.police.uk/home.aspx>

AccessNI:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/employment/employment-terms-and-conditions/starting-a-new-job/accessni-criminal-record-checks.htm>

Disclosure Scotland:

<https://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/>

Making a Subject Access Request

<https://www.gov.uk/copy-of-police-records>

Subject Access Requests (Metropolitan Police area):

<http://content.met.police.uk/Article/Making-a-subject-access-request/140000585548/140000585548>

Disclosure & Barring Service:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>

How to Obtain Criminal Records Checks for Overseas Applicants

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

Department for Education (DfE):

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213145/safeguarding-children-safer-recruitment>

Also for the DfE:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education>