

Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Checks for Asylum Seekers or people with limited documents

Difficulties that asylum seekers and refugees face getting CRB checks

Asylum seekers and refugees often struggle to provide enough accepted documents for a CRB check and this can cause difficulties. However, it is possible to get a CRB check for asylum seekers and refugees. It just might take a little longer.

Why is it complicated?

Asylum seekers have to hand over their identity documents to the Home Office when they apply for asylum and as they are not allowed to work and are dispersed to shared houses they generally do not have all the standard forms of ID that the CRB ask for (e.g. passport, driving licence, utility bill, bank statement, NI number, P45, credit card statement etc).

However, there are letters that the CRB will accept that are not listed on their generic guidance. You can process a CRB using the letters suggested below.

ID letters that asylum seekers and refugees can use

If a volunteer does not have a Group 1 document (a passport, full driving licence, UK birth certificate) then they will need **FIVE** Group 2 documents to get a CRB. Refugees will have the right to work, so should have a benefit book, utility bills in their name etc so can often find enough documents.

The letters must be from 5 different organisations and they must demonstrate an **entitlement** or show that the person is involved in an **official process**.

An **entitlement letter** is a letter confirming that the person is in receipt of benefits or a service.

These could be:

- NASS (National Asylum Support Service) letter –dispersal letter, benefit confirmation/ change letter
- Sodexo benefit letter (JSA or Income Support letter for refugees)
- Medical Card
- Tenancy Agreement
- College photo card
- ARC Card (Asylum Registration Card)

An **official process** letter is a letter confirming that the person is in an ongoing official process e.g. his or her asylum claim is still ongoing. These could be:

- Home Office Letter – Confirmation of application for asylum, an Interview request letter, appeal letter, initial decision letter
- Immigration Appellate Authority letter – 1st hearing letter and/or full hearing letter
- Solicitor letter – This must confirm that the person is in the asylum process, e.g. that they have an interview coming up/ have submitted a fresh claim. An appointment letter is not sufficient.

Refugees may also have:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Bank Statement □ Utility Bill – Gas, electricity, telephone bill etc □ Grant of Status Letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ JSA / IS Benefit book □ TV Licence □ UK Driving Licence
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What if an asylum seeker has none of the above documents?

People without sufficient documents can still be CRB checked, which means asylum seekers and refugees can still apply for volunteering roles. The CRB can be done through the **finger print method**. This checks a volunteer’s fingerprints against those held on the CRB database. It is therefore more reliable than checking with documents but it is more intrusive.

This method can also help anyone with limited documents e.g. young people, students, spouses who may also find themselves without utility bills in their name, a passport or a driving licence.

What to do:

1. Complete our [pro-forma finger print request letter](#).
2. Post off the pro-forma letter when the CRB is first submitted. This will start an automated process on the CRB computers that sends out the necessary letters to complete the process. It also avoids the CRB replying to say they are unable to process the application due to insufficient documents.
3. Your organisation will receive a consent letter from the CRB for the volunteer to sign. This is to confirm that the person is happy for their fingerprints to be taken to establish their identity. When the volunteer has signed this, your organisation should return the form to the CRB.
4. The CRB will then inform the local police headquarters that the volunteer needs to have their fingerprints taken.
5. The local Police headquarters will phone the volunteer directly to arrange a convenient time to take the fingerprints.

6. Once the fingerprints have been taken, the CRB will be able to run a check on the prints and a CRB disclosure will be posted to both your organisation and the volunteer.

What about completing the 5 years address history?

Refugees and asylum seekers (as well as British homeless people, travellers etc) often do not have clear addresses for complete periods of time. When completing this section you must provide a complete address history without any gaps. If there are periods of time when a person had 'no fixed abode' you should write this in the address history.

The CRB only checks the UK criminal record database so overseas addresses are not required. For asylum seekers or refugees, the overseas addresses can be put as 'Overseas from Date 1 – Date 2

e.g.

Overseas:	March 1974 – May 2008
No Fixed Abode in UK	May 2008 – July 2008
1 Sheffield St, Sheffield, S1 1AA	July 2008 - present

Click here for the [CRB address history - example letter for asylum seeker volunteers](#)

How to avoid CRB checks being a barrier to volunteering.

CRB checks can take over 2 months to process and are likely to take longer if you go through the 'finger print request' method. This time delay between applying to volunteer and actually being able to start is a significant barrier for many people and sometimes leads to organisations losing volunteers.

Where volunteer roles require unsupervised work with children or vulnerable adults, there is nothing that can be done to avoid this problem. However, it is often possible to be flexible and develop ways for volunteers to start doing something before the CRB check is processed. Here are some examples from organisations we have worked with:

- Allow the volunteer to start volunteering where they will be closely supervised by a paid member of staff.
- Wait for references to be returned and then allow the volunteer to start.
- Allow the volunteer to do tasks that don't involve working with vulnerable people, for example; office tasks until the CRB check arrives.

If it is possible to do this it will enable people to start volunteering with you quickly and not lose motivation.

ISA – Independent Safeguarding Authority changes coming ...

From November 2010 ISA checks will become a legal requirement for some roles. For those roles you will not be able to let volunteers start until they ISA check has been completed but they can start before the CRB check is carried out. When we have clear

guidance from the CRB and ISA on how this process will work in practice we will update the website to include this information.

For further information about CRB contact: 0870 90 90 811 or visit:

www.crb.gov.uk

www.isa.gov.org.uk/

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