



GUIDANCE ON RECRUITMENT AND DBS

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This guidance document supports our recruitment of volunteers working with children within aikido.

The Aikido Alliance UK (hereinafter referred to as the Alliance) will seek to ensure that:

- all staff and volunteers who are undertaking Regulated Activity are checked against the Barred List for working with children and are not allowed to commence work if they are barred (also see DBS referrals)
- all coaches, Safeguarding Officers, Welfare officers, and others working closely with children undertake appropriate child protection training, sign up to relevant codes of practice and agree to abide by the Alliance's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- all staff and volunteers working with children are aware of good practice and bad practice and know what to do if they have a concern about a child, or about the behaviour of an adult towards a child

Noting that the Alliance does not have direct contact with individual members or clubs, the above will be implemented through the Association Safeguarding Officers (ASOs) within each member Association. The Alliance will support ASOs to understand the requirements of this and all other Policy documents.

RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

It is accepted best practice that all staff and volunteers whose role involves working closely with children must go through an appropriate vetting process as outlined in this document prior to their appointment, to establish their suitability to work with children.

When Alliance affiliated clubs recruit new volunteers, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. In addition, the selection process must be fair and equitable.

Whilst most people working in aikido may have the best possible intentions, the Alliance recognises it has a responsibility to safeguard children participating in aikido and sound recruitment practices will help this process.

Alliance affiliated clubs therefore have a responsibility to ensure that:

- All adults whose role involves working directly or closely with children, including lead coaches, assistant coaches and regular helpers, have the role assessed and undertake a criminal record check at the legally appropriate level where eligible, approved through the Alliance.
- Those involved in Regulated Activity are checked against the DBS Barred List BEFORE they take up their role.
- Coaches working with under 18s hold a suitable Alliance Coaching qualification plus any other mandatory qualification as shall be deemed a requirement for coaching children.
- Coaches have current insurance cover (through maintaining their Association membership).
- Coaches and volunteers have access to induction training that covers current Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

Concerns arising during the recruitment process regarding the suitability or training needs of staff, coaches or volunteers are noted, fed back to the individual and acted upon as appropriate. Examples of managing these concerns could be:

- a coach being asked to undertake additional training before taking up a role working with children OR
- asking for clarification of previous experience or qualifications, say by contacting a previous employer or organisation for which the applicant has volunteered

The above are just examples of concerns or queries which might arise, and which might need acting on. All Clubs should adopt and implement recruitment and selection procedures in line with the following guidance.

PLANNING RECRUITMENT

The Alliance has drawn up a list of roles, along with a clear job description for each. These list the full range of duties each role will involve along with a person specification describing the skills and attributes required (e.g. experience, qualifications or other requirements, such as an ability to communicate effectively with children). This helps everyone to understand the nature of the role and will help ensure that every applicant is treated in a fair and consistent manner.

It is important that we gain information about an applicant's attitudes and commitment to child safeguarding. **No matter how good they are at coaching, they are not suitable to work with children if they do not take safeguarding seriously.**

ADVERTISING

In aikido (due to the technical nature of the syllabus and style variations) it is most likely that volunteers will be recruited/selected from within Alliance affiliated clubs. It is not always necessary, therefore, to go through a formal advertising process.

APPLICATION FORM AND SELF-DECLARATION

Anyone expressing an interest in applying for a role/job should, as best practice, complete an application form. The form should be designed to gain information required about the individual, their employment history, relevant experience, qualifications and training.

The form should include a section allowing the individual to self-declare information that the Alliance is legally entitled to consider. For roles covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order, the wording must distinguish unspent convictions and cautions from spent convictions and cautions that are not protected under the DBS filtering rules. Applicants must not be asked to disclose protected convictions or cautions. The form should obtain consent for any appropriate criminal record check and explain that failure to disclose information which the applicant is legally required to disclose may affect their appointment. The applicant should also provide two references which should be checked before any offer is confirmed.

All Alliance affiliated clubs will work towards achieving best practice in recruitment processes. The Alliance understands and appreciates that traditional recruitment methods may not have met these best practice guidelines. There may well be legacy procedures within affiliated clubs. The Alliance Lead Safeguarding Office will offer help and guidance for all affiliated clubs to ensure best practice is implemented.

If Alliance affiliated clubs seek to recruit someone who has previous convictions, please refer to this guidance provided by NACRO:

<https://www.nacro.org.uk/resource/recruiting-safely-and-fairly/>

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Any potential new coach or volunteer within an Alliance affiliated club should have an interview. This need not be formal. At this stage it should be possible to confirm the information the applicant has given on their application

form and questions can be asked about how they would handle certain situations so as to determine their approach to working with children.

Alliance affiliated clubs will keep a proportionate record of the application paperwork and recruitment decision in case a grievance or allegation of discrimination is raised. Records must be retained only for as long as necessary and handled in accordance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Alliance's applicable retention and privacy arrangements.

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

In December 2012 the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), which provided criminal record checks, merged with the Independent Safeguarding Authority, which made barring decisions, to become the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). DBS certificates may disclose criminal record information according to the level of check and the statutory filtering rules. Where the role is eligible, an Enhanced DBS check may also include a check of the Children's Barred List. The Alliance has drawn up a list of roles that are, under normal circumstances, likely to require a criminal record check.

Regulated Activity is defined principally by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended. An organisation must not knowingly permit a person who is barred from working with children to undertake Regulated Activity with children. From 1 September 2026, supervision no longer removes otherwise qualifying teaching, training, instruction, care or supervision of children from Regulated Activity.

A DBS check is only one part of safer recruitment. It provides information permitted for the particular level of check and is subject to statutory filtering. A clear certificate does not prove that a person presents no risk, so clubs must also use applications, references, role assessment, interview or discussion, induction, training, codes of conduct and ongoing supervision of practice.

All checks must be undertaken through the Alliance's approved channels.

It is important that candidates are fully aware of the DBS procedures when they apply for a role which requires a criminal record check. They must understand that should a Disclosure contain 'content' then this will be requested and reviewed by the Alliance's Case Management Group

INDUCTION AND SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Induction to a new role will generally include the following:

- Verification of criminal records check and a discussion to identify training needs and timescales
- Agreeing to the Alliance Codes of Conduct
- Explanation of the Alliance's Safeguarding Policy and related procedures
- Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the job. The new appointee should be aware of their role description and told who they should go to if they have any questions

It is best practice for all those working with children and young people to attend the UK Coaching module: Safeguarding and Protecting Children (SPC) Workshop (**or equivalent**). This workshop provides generic safeguarding training for sports organisations and will help them to:

- analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, to help ensure no concerns arise from misunderstandings or misinterpretation

- recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- respond to concerns expressed by a child
- work safely and effectively with children.

The Alliance may provide training as an alternative to SPC.

Safeguarding principles will also be embedded in relevant Coaching Courses and Welfare Officer Courses.

DBS REFERRALS: IMPORTANT

Alliance affiliated clubs must not knowingly permit a person who is barred by the DBS to undertake Regulated Activity with children. A regulated activity provider has a legal duty to refer to the DBS when the statutory referral conditions are met: broadly, where it withdraws permission for a person to engage in Regulated Activity (or would have done so had the person not ceased the activity) because the person has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child, or has engaged in relevant conduct or satisfied the harm test. Failure to refer when the duty applies is a criminal offence. The club must contact the Alliance's Lead Safeguarding Officer promptly, who will support the referral process; this does not displace the club's own legal duty where it is the regulated activity provider.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE

REGULATED ACTIVITY

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 introduced the concept of requiring organisations to check individuals engaged in 'Regulated Activity'.

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 amended the definition of Regulated Activity. Section 139 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 subsequently removed the supervision exemption in England and Wales with effect from 1 September 2026. A person who carries out the relevant activities frequently, or overnight within the statutory test, may therefore be in Regulated Activity whether supervised or not.

The Act also created a list of people (the "barred list") who may not work with – or seek to work with - children or young people under the age of 18.

LEGAL DUTIES FOR THE ALLIANCE

1. It is an offence to knowingly allow a barred person to work in 'Regulated Activity';
2. It is a legal requirement to inform the DBS if an individual is removed from 'Regulated Activity' because they have harmed or because they pose a risk of harm to vulnerable groups (including children).

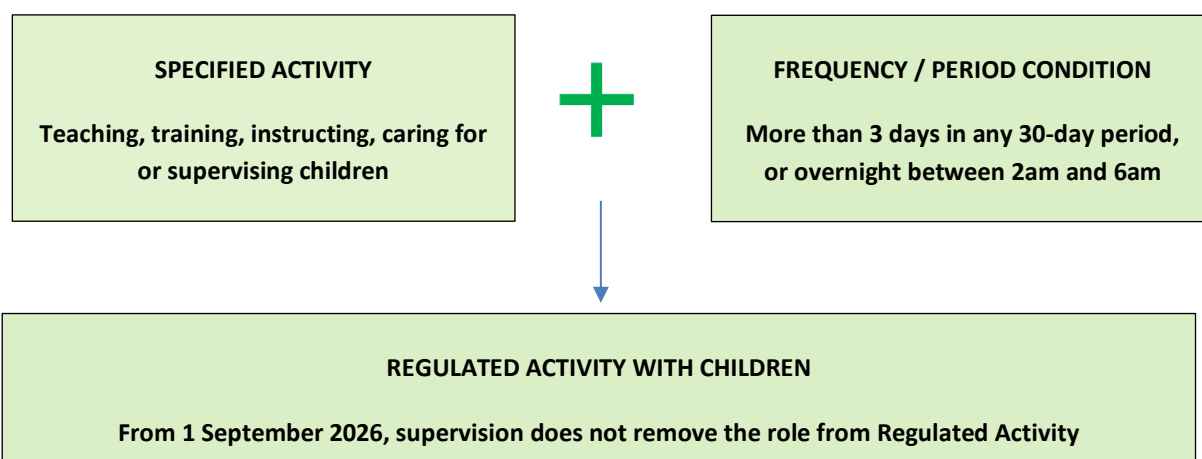
Alliance affiliated clubs may request Children's Barred List information only where the role is legally eligible. For most Alliance roles this will be because the person is undertaking Regulated Activity with children. Clubs must assess the actual duties and frequency and must not request a barred-list check for a role that is not legally eligible.

Alliance affiliated clubs must be able to determine if an individual is in 'Regulated Activity' so they can:

1. Fulfil their legal duties;
2. Ask for only the level of information they are legally entitled to obtain.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING WHO IS IN REGULATED ACTIVITY

The following summary reflects the post-1 September 2026 position for the activities most commonly undertaken in Alliance junior aikido. Other statutory routes to Regulated Activity can apply, so clubs must assess the complete role.



SUPERVISION FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2026

From 1 September 2026, the previous supervision exemption no longer applies to the specified activities of teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children in England and Wales.

If the nature and frequency or overnight conditions are met, the person is in Regulated Activity even where a checked senior coach provides close or constant supervision. Supervision remains an important safeguarding control, but it no longer changes the legal classification of the role.

This change applies to paid staff and volunteers. It is particularly relevant to assistant coaches and regular helpers who actively instruct, train, care for or supervise children.

The usual frequency condition for these activities is work on more than three days in any 30-day period. The overnight condition is satisfied by qualifying activity carried out at any time between 2am and 6am with an opportunity for face-to-face contact with children.

Occasional help does not automatically become Regulated Activity. Clubs must assess what the person actually does, how often they do it and whether any other statutory route applies. The change does not mean that every adult connected with a junior class should receive a DBS or barred-list check.

LEAD COACHES, ASSISTANT COACHES AND HELPERS

A lead coach who runs a regular junior class will normally be in Regulated Activity. From 1 September 2026, an assistant coach or helper who regularly teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children may also be in Regulated Activity even when working under the lead coach's supervision. A person providing only infrequent or incidental help must be assessed on the actual duties and frequency; a barred-list check must not be requested unless the role is legally eligible.

ROLES WITHIN THE ALLIANCE WHICH MAY REQUIRE DBS CHECKS

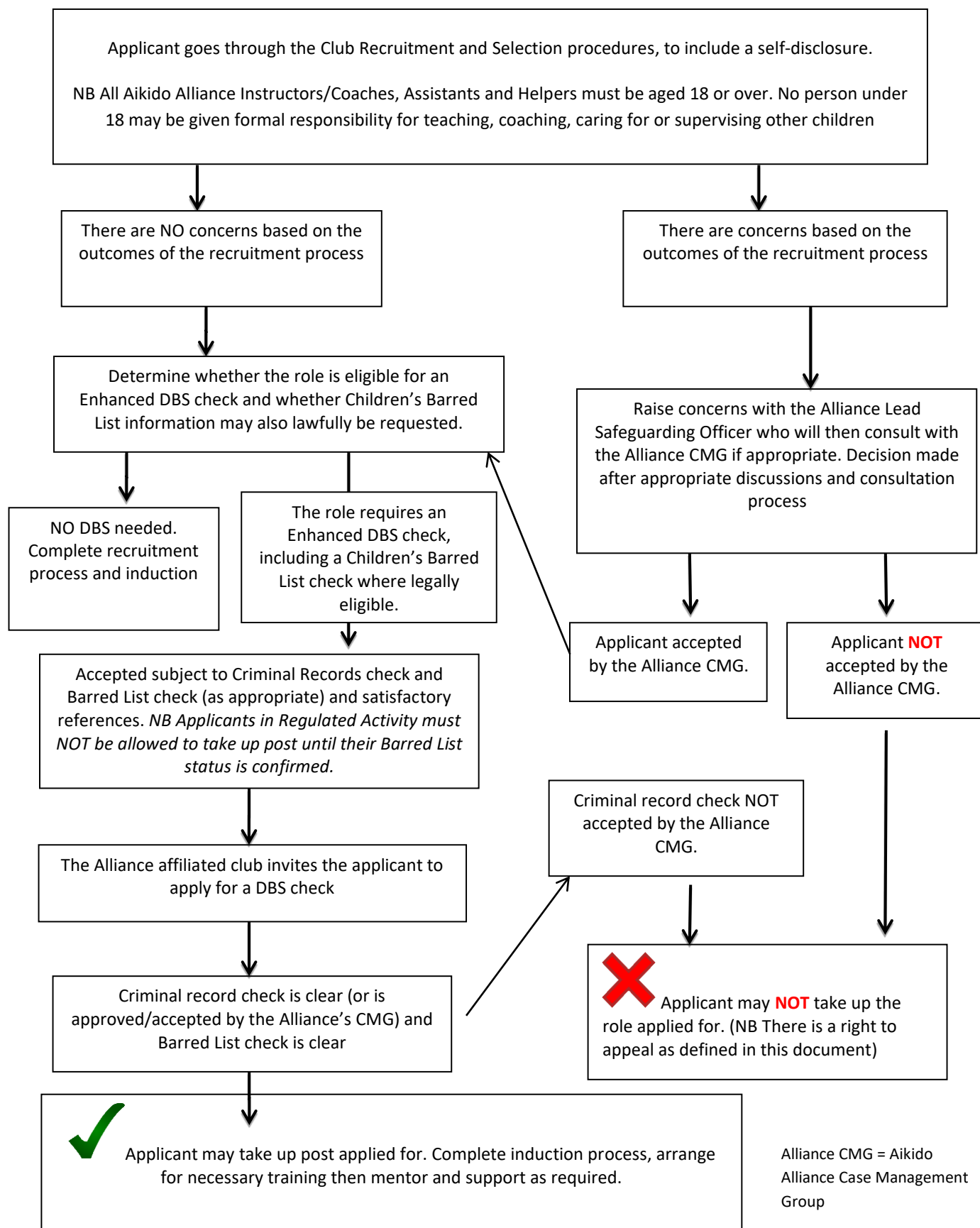
To remain compliant, the Alliance, its affiliated Associations and clubs will assess the full duties and frequency of each role and use current government DBS eligibility guidance and the online eligibility tool. Eligibility must be reviewed whenever the role or working arrangements change.

<https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>

The outcome and rationale should be saved by the club as part of its DBS decision record, subject to appropriate access controls and retention arrangements.

A person who manages another person undertaking Regulated Activity may be eligible for the same level of DBS check where the statutory management criteria are met. Welfare and Safeguarding Officers must be assessed by reference to their actual duties and any relevant eligible position; their title alone should not be treated as automatic eligibility for barred-list information.

FLOWCHART FOR RECRUITING A NEW EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER



CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

Criminal record or other safeguarding information may indicate that a person presents a risk, or potential risk, to children. The relevance and weight of lawfully disclosed information will depend on matters such as the nature and seriousness of the conduct, its relevance to the role, the person's age at the time, the time elapsed, any subsequent patterns of behaviour, evidence of changed circumstances and the safeguards reasonably available.

When reviewing information lawfully obtained, the Case Management Group will exercise safeguarding judgement in every case. It will not seek or take into account protected convictions or cautions. The Group will distinguish a legal bar from other disclosed information and will consider that:

- Some offences may only indicate a risk to children in certain circumstances.
- Not all convicted or cautioned individuals will necessarily pose a continued risk to children.

A person included in the Children's Barred List must not be permitted to undertake Regulated Activity with children. Lawfully disclosed violent or sexual offending against children will be treated as an exceptionally serious safeguarding concern and will normally exclude the person from work with children within Alliance affiliated clubs, following a recorded assessment of relevance, risk and any applicable legal prohibition.

The Alliance Case Management Group may also recommend that a person be excluded from being involved with aikido in any capacity should it take the view that the risk to children is too high and cannot be safely managed.

AFTER THE DISCLOSURE IS ISSUED

- The applicant receives the DBS certificate. The applicant should already have been told that, if the certificate contains information, they may be asked to show the original certificate to the Alliance's Lead Safeguarding Officer for the recruitment decision.
- The Alliance's Lead Safeguarding Officer may be advised through the approved processing channel whether the certificate is clear or contains information; the certificate is issued to the applicant and its detailed content must be considered only through the lawful certificate-review process.
- If the certificate contains information and the applicant does not provide it when lawfully requested for the decision, the Alliance's Lead Safeguarding Officer will contact the applicant and request sight of the original certificate.
- The Alliance's Lead Safeguarding Officer and Case Management Group will assess only information that may lawfully be considered, discuss relevant content with the applicant and record a proportionate suitability and risk decision, including any necessary safeguards.

THE DBS UPDATE SERVICE

The Alliance strongly recommends that all those being DBS checked register with the Update Service on receipt of their criminal record certificate. This service is free for volunteers (correct as at 1/9/2026) but note that that registration must occur **within 30 days of the certificate being issued**.

The Alliance will also accept criminal record checks undertaken by other organisations providing that:

- a. The role is the same or equivalent
- b. The applicant is registered with the DBS Update service

With the individual's consent, the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer will inspect the original DBS certificate and obtain the details needed to carry out an Update Service status check. The check may be used only where the workforce, level of check and barred-list information (where applicable) match the new role. If the status result shows no change to the certificate, the Lead Safeguarding Officer will notify the affiliated club that the certificate remains current for the assessed role.

If the Update Service status shows that the certificate is no longer current, or the existing certificate is not at the legally appropriate level for the role, the individual must apply for a new DBS certificate promptly.

As Alliance policy, pending the new certificate and suitability decision the individual must not undertake Regulated Activity with children. Supervision does not take a qualifying role outside Regulated Activity. A club may assign duties that are genuinely outside Regulated Activity only following a written role and safeguarding risk assessment.

Once the new check has been obtained it will be processed in the normal way.

RENEWAL OF DBS CHECKS

DBS eligibility and status will be reviewed at least every three years and sooner when a role or circumstances change. DBS certificates do not have a statutory expiry date. The three-year review will be completed by:

1. Applying for a new DBS certificate
2. Using the DBS Update service so that a status check can be performed

Where a person is registered on the Update Service checks may be performed more frequently.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH POSITIVE CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

When information is received in the form of a positive disclosure the following procedures will be implemented.

The Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer will collate initial information to present to the Alliance Case Management Group.

The Alliance Case Management Group will make one of the two following decisions:

2. No further information required – decision process undertaken/risk mitigation plan produced (where required) and decision logged.
3. More information required from the subject of the disclosure and/or statutory agencies.

When further information is required, the Alliance Case Management Group will first identify a lawful basis and, where required, obtain the subject's permission before seeking information from a relevant agency. A refusal to provide information that is reasonably and lawfully required may be taken into account when deciding whether the Alliance can safely confirm the appointment.

This information gathering process WILL NOT be an investigation into any offences or alleged offences. It will merely gather additional facts needed to make an informed risk assessment decision.

When further information has been gathered the Alliance Case Management Group will decide whether any restrictions or action should be placed on the applicant.

SUSPENSIONS

On occasion it is necessary to temporarily suspend an individual either due to the nature of the material on the criminal record check or because further information is required in order to reach a decision.

In these cases both the individual will be informed (with information copied to the relevant Alliance Club Instructor).

The Alliance's Lead Safeguarding Officer working in collaboration with the affiliated club will put appropriate risk mitigation measures in place to ensure any suspended individual does not break that suspension order.

Any such suspensions will be on a Without Prejudice basis until the Alliance Case Management Group has reached its final decision or recommendation.

APPEALS

An Alliance Panel will be set-up to investigate all legitimate complaints and code of conduct violations and will ensure that each affiliated member of the Alliance is afforded equal rights and guaranteed a fair and open process regarding complaints / disciplinary measures. Appeals will be heard by a separate panel convened for the purpose.

Appeals must be made in within seven days of the decision being advised, giving the basis on which the appeal is made (grounds of appeal).

GROUND'S FOR APPEAL

- The penalty was too severe for the incident.
- New relevant information is available.
- The correct procedures were not followed.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

It is reasonable for the Alliance to rely on reports from statutory agencies. In these cases the statutory agency's position would be completely independent. Specialist child protection professionals will have carried out the investigation and the subject will have been given the opportunity to answer the allegations, with the aid of legal representation.

If this is the case and the statutory agency has reached clear conclusions then the Alliance may not carry out its own investigation but will make a risk assessment based on the report and conclusions and/or recommendations of the statutory agency.

Individuals may still appeal the decision reached by the Alliance using the appeals procedure in this document.

NB: A person included in the Children's Barred List must not hold any role involving Regulated Activity with children. Lawfully disclosed violent or sexual offending against children will be treated as an exceptionally serious

concern and will normally exclude the person from any position involving children within an Alliance affiliated club, following a recorded suitability and risk assessment. The Alliance may also exclude a person from aikido activity where it concludes that a risk to children is too high and cannot be safely managed.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION ORDERS

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable persons in aikido and in order to meet its general safeguarding obligations, the Alliance Case Management Group may at any time impose a Temporary Suspension Order (TSO) suspending the Individual from any and all activity for such duration and on such terms as it considers to be appropriate.

The Alliance will not be liable to any suspended Individual or Club for any loss of any nature arising as a result of or in connection with the imposition of a Temporary or Permanent Suspension Order or the application of these guidelines.

THE ALLIANCE'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE DBS CODE OF PRACTICE

The Alliance through its affiliated clubs will

- Accurately and comprehensively verify the identity of the applicant prior to the submission of a Disclosure application and ensure that any person undertaking identity verification checks on their behalf is suitable and trained appropriately
- Store Disclosure information securely
- Retain a record of the disclosure decision, but retain the DBS certificate or any copy or representation of its content only for as long as necessary and normally no longer than six months after the recruitment decision, unless a dispute is raised or exceptional circumstances justify longer retention in accordance with DBS guidance and data-protection requirements.
- Ensure that no reproductions of the Disclosure or its content are made, including photocopies or scanned images, unless with the prior agreement of the DBS or as a result of a stipulated requirement relating to the e-channel service
- Only share Disclosure information with relevant persons in the course of their specific duties relevant to recruitment and vetting processes
- Dispose of Disclosure information in a secure manner
- Ensure that they comply with DBS guidance on the portability of Disclosures and their contents
- Have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders that is available to applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- Notify applicants in advance of the requirement for a DBS check, the level and workforce requested, whether barred-list information is included, the lawful self-declaration requirements, and how relevant information may affect the recruitment decision.
- Discuss the content of the Disclosure with the applicant before withdrawing any offer of employment
- Provide a copy of this Code of Practice to the applicant upon request
- Use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that they only submit Disclosure applications in accordance with the Disclosure eligibility criteria for relevant positions or employment
- Correctly apply the DBS definition of a volunteer to assert eligibility for free-of-charge Disclosures

IT IS AN OFFENCE TO:

- Disclose information contained within a Disclosure to any person who is not a member, officer or employee of the Registered Body or, in the case of Umbrella Bodies, their client unless a relevant legal exception applies
- Disclose information to any member, officer or employee where it is not related to that employee's duties
- Knowingly make a false statement for the purpose of obtaining, or enabling another person to obtain, a Disclosure

KEY LEGAL AND OFFICIAL REFERENCES

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Schedule 4, as amended, including by section 139 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026.

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012; Police Act 1997; Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order; Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Disclosure and Barring Service: Eligibility for Enhanced with Barred List DBS checks with children (published 1 September 2026); DBS filtering guidance; DBS Code of Practice; and the legal duty to refer guidance.

Current official guidance and eligibility tool: www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check and www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service.

CHANGE LOG

Aug 2022	Minor amendment to text – not affecting meaning
May 2024	Addition of references as part of recruitment best practice
Oct 24	Minor amendments to text
Sept 2026	v4: updated for removal of the supervision exemption; revised DBS eligibility, filtering, referral, decision-making, Update Service, renewal and data-handling guidance.