

## What is a Volunteer? - Guidance Notes

Let's first dismiss a common misconception: There is no legal requirement to vet all volunteers. Your decision to get a CRB check should be based on either

- A thorough risk assessment of the role to be performed by the volunteer and the extent to which this will bring them into contact with children or vulnerable adults or
- If the voluntary work is to be carried out on someone else's premises, for example a school or care home, whether it is a requirement of that organisation for a check to be done, in order to comply with the legislation that governs their business.

If you do need a CRB check, the CRB will provide this "free of charge" for volunteers, but only if the volunteer is:

*" a person who is engaged in any activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travelling and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives".*

Some people can be referred to as volunteers, but do not actually meet the CRB's criteria to get a free check. This is because they may receive, or expect to receive, a benefit, such as remuneration or a credit towards a qualification. For example, students on training placement; people on work placements; foster parents/carers must pay for their checks.

Also, do not forget that these "free checks" are in fact subsidised by all of the other fee-paying customers. It is therefore only fair to expect that the CRB will perform regular audits on volunteer applications to ensure "free of charge" checks are not being abused. If an application is marked incorrectly as a volunteer, and this comes to their attention, the CRB will contact the organisation that submitted the application to inform them of this error and may then make a retrospective charge to recover the cost of the application. Persistent false claims could ultimately lead to deregistration.