

# Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) Scheme

The Department of Health have launched a phased introduction of the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) scheme. At the heart of the POVA scheme is the POVA list of care workers who have harmed vulnerable adults in their care. The list should be checked when care providers wish to appoint individuals to care positions working with vulnerable adults.

From 26 July 2004, there will be a statutory requirement on care providers to check if workers they wish to appoint to a 'care position' are included on the POVA list. A 'care position' means:

- A position that would enable workers employed in care homes to have regular contact in the course of their duties with care home residents; and
- A position that would enable workers employed by domiciliary care agencies to provide personal care in their own homes to vulnerable adults.

This requirement also applies when these individuals move, or are transferred, from non-care positions to care positions within their current employment.

From 26 July 2004, registered care providers must request a check against the POVA list when considering a person for a care position. This check can only be made through the Standard or Enhanced Disclosure application process.

Employment agencies must apply for POVA checks with regard to care workers they supply to registered providers of care homes and domiciliary care agencies. The care providers themselves have a duty to ensure that such checks have been carried out.

Staff in employment prior to 26<sup>th</sup> July who already have a standard or enhanced disclosure, are not required to apply again to be checked against the POVA list.

## POVAFirst – Fast Track Checking of POVA List

The Department of Health have introduced a Statutory Requirement on care providers to check workers applying for care positions against the POVA list through the Standard or Enhanced Disclosure process, before they take up their duties.

The disclosure process takes 2 weeks (standard) or 4 weeks (enhanced). The CRB recognise that in exceptional circumstances a fast track process may be needed, otherwise staffing levels may not meet statutory requirements.

In these exceptional circumstances only, APCS can check the POVA list through the CRB whilst the disclosure process continues.

You apply for a disclosure in the normal manner, and request a POVA check. The results of the check will be passed to the employer through APCS within 3 days of the completed disclosure application reaching the CRB.

## How to Apply for Fast Track POVA Checking

In exceptional circumstances where you cannot wait for a disclosure to be processed before starting an applicant in a care job, you can ask for Fast Track POVA Checking.

Apply for a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure in the normal way. We cannot obtain a POVA check until after the disclosure has been submitted to the CRB.

Enclose a note with the application saying you want fast track POVA checking. Enclose the fee of £5, in addition to the normal disclosure application fee. You can request Fast Track POVA Checking by phone at any time after you have sent the disclosure application to us.

## What Does a POVA Check look like ?

The Disclosure document you receive back now has an extra box on it where any information held on the POVA list will be entered.

The results of a Fast Track POVA check will be sent to you from APCS within 3 days of the completed Disclosure application reaching the CRB. It will say either of the following :

**Option 1.** *Please wait for the full Disclosure document before making a recruitment decision regarding this applicant.*

**Option 2.** *No match exists for this person on the current POVA list.*

The CRB reveal no more information than this in a POVA First check.

Note that an option 1 response means the check has been inconclusive, and does not necessarily mean that adverse information is held about the individual on the POVA list. Only if you receive an option 2 response can you start the applicant in a care job, prior to receiving the Disclosure document.

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Our experienced Help Desk Team are on hand to advise you easily and quickly by phone ...

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