



Changes to DBS checks for volunteers relating to the Crime and Policing Act 2026 (Comes into effect 1 September 2026)

What is changing?

From **1 September 2026**, the law changes how DBS checks work for volunteers who have contact with children. At the moment, a volunteer who works with children **may not need a regulated activity DBS check if they are supervised by someone who is already cleared to work with children**. This is known as the **supervision exemption**.

That exemption is being removed.

What does that mean for volunteers?

From **1 September 2026**, if a volunteer:

- works in a setting involving children, and
- does so **regularly** (more than three times in any 30-day period, even across different locations), **or**
- stays overnight as part of the role,

then that role will be considered **regulated activity**, whether the volunteer is supervised or not.

As a result, those volunteers will need an:

Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check.

Why does it matter?

The Children's Barred List contains people who are legally banned from working or volunteering with children.

It is a criminal offence:

- for someone on the Children's Barred List to undertake regulated activity with children; and
- for an organisation to knowingly allow them to do so.

What should NHS and partner organisations do?

Review volunteer roles that involve contact with children and identify:

- which roles will become regulated activity from 1 September 2026;
- whether existing volunteers in those roles need a new Enhanced DBS with Children's Barred List check; and
- whether future volunteers in those roles should be recruited using this higher level of DBS check.

Summary

From 1 September 2026, supervised volunteers who regularly work with children will no longer be exempt from regulated activity rules and will generally require an Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check.



Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-or-volunteering-in-regulated-activity-with-children/regulated-activity-removal-of-the-supervision-exemption-comes-into-force-1-september-2026>