

International Child Protection Certificate UK

Information and Guidance for Individuals, Schools and Organisations



ICPC

You can't tell by looking...

... if one of your employees or
volunteers has a sexual interest
in children

ICPC

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Introducing the ICPC

The International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) has been developed in the United Kingdom (UK) to help better protect children from UK nationals, or anyone who has spent time living in the UK who would seek to travel and work overseas to sexually abuse them.

The ICPC is issued following a check made against police information and intelligence databases in the UK and lists all of the applicant's convictions. The Certificate can provide reassurance that staff employed in schools and voluntary organisations do not have a criminal record in the UK that makes them unsuitable to work with children.

The ICPC is the only UK police check produced specifically for UK nationals and residents working overseas.

The ICPC is produced by the ACRO Criminal Records Office (ACRO) in the UK in conjunction with the National Crime Agency (NCA) - Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command, the UK's national law enforcement agency for child protection.

Background to the ICPC: safeguarding children from abuse

The NCA's CEOP Command has investigated cases of UK nationals who have secured paid or voluntary employment in another country in order to gain access to, groom and sexually abuse children. Many of these individuals were later found to have previous convictions or intelligence held about them. This information would have prevented them from working in UK-based or UK-linked organisations that have access to the UK Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) vetting processes (formerly CRB).

International schools and other organisations often require new employees to obtain criminal records checks, but are not always able to access UK police checks from overseas. It is known to the NCA's CEOP command that UK sex offenders have exploited this fact to gain access to children in other countries. Now, with the introduction of the ICPC, any organisation who employs UK nationals or persons who have spent time in the UK can request a UK police check to be confident that they are not employing someone with a criminal history that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

Whilst the ICPC can provide organisations with a greater degree of reassurance that the person they are employing or who is volunteering for them is suitable to work with children, it is important to remember that the police checks are only as good as the information against which they are checking. Some people

who have a sexual interest in children might never have come to the attention of the UK authorities. With this in mind it is crucial that any organisation working with children has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure that children are not put at any further risk from those who may be seeking to harm them.

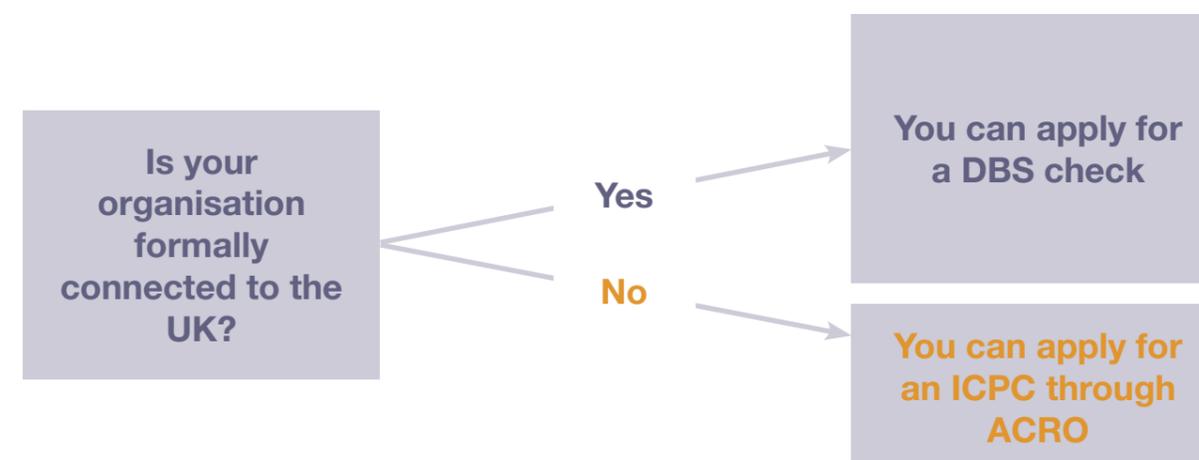
Case Study >> A report was made to the NCA's CEOP Command regarding a man (RG) who was teaching in a school in India. Intelligence revealed he did in fact have previous, historical convictions for contact sexual offences against boys in the UK at a school where he used to hold a teaching position. Since his release from prison in the UK, he had travelled to numerous countries in Asia working as a teacher in international schools. None of the schools he was working in had any means to make a police check against him.

The NCA's CEOP Command worked with law enforcement and government authorities in India to help them manage the risk that RG posed to children in their country. Following their local investigation of RG, he was found to be in possession of child abuse images. Now back in the UK and having accepted a UK police caution for the image offences in India, RG has been placed on the Sex Offender's Register and is subject to risk management by the local police force.

Is the ICPC suitable for your organisation?

If you are a UK-based or UK-linked school or other organisation, you can access your pre-employment screening checks via the DBS. The ICPC has been specifically designed for organisations that are not formally connected to the UK and therefore cannot access this route for police checks.

The ICPC is only appropriate if a DBS check is not available.



Organisations that work with children may wish to make a criminal records check a requirement of their pre-employment references in order to encourage employees to obtain the ICPC. The Certificate can also be obtained for those already in employment. This is considered best practice in many countries to safeguard children from those who wish them harm.

The following are examples of organisations that could request an ICPC:

- International or local schools
- Orphanages
- Charitable organisations who work directly with young people
- Organisations offering sports, games and vacation opportunities to young people
- Government organisations

How does it work?

The NCA's CEOP Command recommend that every overseas school, or other overseas organisation that works with children should require all UK nationals and persons who have resided in the UK to provide them with the ICPC. This applies to anyone who is seeking to work or is already working within the organisation, either as an employee or volunteer.

It is the responsibility of the staff member to apply for the ICPC and supply it to the requesting organisation. An employer cannot apply for the Certificate on behalf of a member of staff. The member of staff will only be able to apply for the ICPC if they are employed or have a provisional offer of employment from an organisation.

The ICPC costs **£60**, which is payable by the applicant. There is no charge for schools or organisations to participate in the scheme.

The application form and guidance notes can be obtained by visiting the ACRO website at: **www.acro.police.uk/icpc**.

Once the application form has been received by ACRO, the Certificate will be issued within 10 working days (provided there are no issues with the application, as set out in the Applicant Declaration section of the application form).

The employer will only become aware of what is contained on the ICPC if it is made available by the applicant. It is the responsibility of the employer to assess whether the information contained on the ICPC makes the applicant unsuitable to work with children.¹

¹ ACRO and its partners reserve the right to refuse to provide an ICPC if it is believed that it would be inappropriate to do so.

Why should you only accept the ICPC?

The ICPC is specifically designed for use by overseas schools and organisations.

ACRO provides other types of police checks, including Police Certificates for immigration purposes and Subject Access disclosures requested under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, whilst these checks are suitable for their intended purposes, they are not recommended alternatives to the ICPC. This is because they either contain less information than an ICPC, or they do not require checks to be carried out on other UK national criminal record systems or intelligence databases.

Ultimately, the ICPC provides employers with access to a greater level of information than the two other forms of disclosure, enabling fully informed risk based decisions to be made in relation to a person's suitability to work with children.

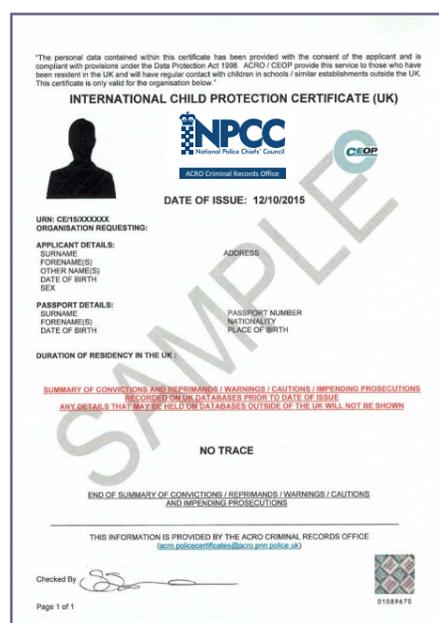
	Subject Access	Police Certificate for Immigration Purposes	International Child Protection Certificate
Checks Completed			
Police National Computer (England and Wales)	✓	✓	✓
CHS (Scotland)	.	✓	✓
Causeway (Northern Ireland)	.	✓	✓
RedCap	.	✓	✓
Police National Database	.	.	✓
CETS (Child Exploitation Tracking Service)	.	.	✓
Certificate Data			
Arrest / Not Guilty / No Further Action	✓	.	.
Impending Prosecutions	✓	✓	✓
Cautions	✓	✓	✓
Reprimands	✓	✓	✓
Warnings	✓	✓	✓
Convictions	✓	✓	✓
Includes both 'Spent' and 'Unspent' records as defined by 'Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974'	✓	.	✓
Includes <u>ONLY</u> records that have not 'Stepped Down' under the 'ACPO Guidelines for Nominal Records held on the Police National Computer'	.	✓	.
Security Protected Certificate Paper	.	✓	✓
Photograph of the applicant	.	✓	✓
Passport Details	.	✓	✓
Turnaround Time (excluding dates of receipt and dispatch)	40 days	2 or 10 days (premium vs standard)	10 days

The Certificate

The Certificate...

- is an up-to-date police check available to organisations with no formal link to the UK, and who are employing and looking to recruit UK nationals, or anyone who has spent time living in the UK, to work with children
- will list all convictions, cautions, warnings, reprimands and impending cases held on UK police databases for you to assess the holder's suitability to work in your organisation
- will state that there is 'No trace' if there are no known convictions
- will be valid on the date of issue only, and therefore it is for the employer to decide how often their staff should renew their ICPC
- takes just 10 working days to process and can be applied for anywhere in the world provided there are no issues with the application, as set out in the Applicant Declaration section of the application form
- costs £60 which is paid by the applicant, not the requesting organisation
- significantly reduces the risk of employing convicted child sex offenders from the UK.

Security Information



The ICPC has a number of security features which provide assurance that it is authentic, including a heat spot, anti copying, holographic, photographic and watermark features. The Certificate also contains a unique reference number and unique serial number. It is important that you only accept the original copy of the Certificate so that you can check these security features.

If you have any concerns about the authenticity of a Certificate you have been shown, please contact ACRO Customer Services, who will be able to confirm against their records if the copy you have been shown is genuine.

Once the school or organisation takes receipt of the ICPC, it is their responsibility to keep it safe and secure.

Getting Started - Organisations

If your organisation...

- works with children
- employs staff and volunteers from the UK and individuals who have ever lived in the UK; and
- does not have any formal links with the UK (and therefore is not able to access DBS processes)

... you can register with the ICPC (UK) scheme by contacting ACRO Customer Services.

Getting Started - Individuals

If you are a UK national or have been resident in the UK and are intending to travel overseas to work with children, the school or organisation you will be working with may require you to provide them with an ICPC. Before submitting an ICPC application you should contact your employer to check whether they will require you to provide the Certificate.

Please visit the ACRO ICPC website at: www.acro.police.uk/ICPC/ for more information on the ICPC application process, further advice, to apply for an ICPC or for more information on paying by cheque, bank draft, Postal Order or bank transfer.

ACRO Customer Services
 +44 (0) 1962 871 111 customer.services@acro.pnn.police.uk

Useful Links

National Crime Agency - Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command
www.ceop.police.uk

ACRO Criminal Records Office (ACRO)
www.acro.police.uk

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Information Commissioner's Office
www.ico.gov.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

Q What information is recorded on an ICPC?

A All convictions including cautions, final warnings, reprimands and impending cases are disclosed on the ICPC.

Q What happens when a conviction for a child sex offence is revealed?

A Any application that reveals convictions or high-grade intelligence of sexual interest in children will be referred to the NCA's CEOP Command who will manage the case in line with current operating procedures. The ICPC will only be issued once NCA-CEOP have managed the situation.

Q Who can apply for the ICPC?

A UK nationals or individuals of other nationalities who have resided in the UK can apply. The application can be completed whilst in the UK or overseas.

Q How can an employer obtain an ICPC for their staff?

A Certificates can only be provided at the request of the applicant. An employer cannot apply on their behalf and they will only become aware of what is contained on the ICPC if it is made available by the applicant.

Q How long is the ICPC valid for?

A Certificates only reflect what was recorded on the UK Police National Computer (PNC) at the time of issue as any convictions recorded after this date would not be shown. It is for the employer to decide how often their staff should renew their ICPC.

Q Will the ICPC state whether the individual is suitable to work with children?

A No, the ICPC will show a person's criminal record as it was recorded at the time of issue. The assessment as to whether an individual is suitable to work with children can only be determined by the employer.

Q How much does the ICPC cost and how long does it take to produce?

A Certificates cost £60 and will be produced within 10 working days (excluding postal time and provided there are no issues with the application, as set out in the Applicant Declaration section of the application form).

Q What is the difference between the ICPC and a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (formerly CRB), or Scotland / Northern Ireland equivalent?

A DBS is not available to the vast majority of overseas organisations who employ UK nationals to work with children. The ICPC was developed to fill this specific gap.

Overseas organisations that are linked to a UK registered body have access to a DBS check. The ICPC is not an alternative to a DBS disclosure. It should be used only if the DBS route is not available.

Q Does this mean that UK nationals may have to achieve a higher standard in terms of personal checks than would be applicable to other nationalities, or locals, in any given country?

A The ICPC is evidence of the UK leading an initiative to safeguard children overseas and as best practice for other countries to adopt, rather than UK nationals having to undergo additional checks to work with children.

UK citizens will benefit from this initiative as they are better placed to provide evidence of their criminal history where an equivalent scheme is not available in other countries. Those individuals with convictions or high-grade intelligence of their potential to offend against children will be prevented from taking up opportunities abroad where they would otherwise have access to children.

Q As an individual, I am aware I can apply for a 'basic' certificate through Access Northern Ireland or Disclosure Scotland; Why do I need an ICPC?

A Access Northern Ireland and Disclosure Scotland are disclosure agencies and will, on application, provide individuals with 'basic' level disclosure certificates.

This means they will detail all convictions which are not 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

The ICPC provides a level of information akin to an enhanced DBS check (available only through registered bodies and not directly to the individual) which means it includes cautions, reprimands, warnings, pending prosecutions and checks are made against police intelligence databases.

If an applicant for an ICPC is found to have a record indicating a sexual interest in children, the application will be referred to the NCA's CEOP Command to deal with in line with usual operating procedures prior to any certificate being issued. ICPC therefore provides a greater level of reassurance than basic checks.

Q Why can't DBS, Disclosure Scotland and Access Northern Ireland provide standard or enhanced checks (which are higher than basic) to organisations overseas?

A Current legislation only permits the disclosure agencies (DBS, Disclosure Scotland and Access Northern Ireland) to provide their services within the UK to registered bodies. The standard and enhanced certificates are sent to these bodies and not to the applicant. A change in the law would be required to allow these bodies to provide information to organisations overseas.



ACRO Criminal Records Office

www.acro.police.uk/icpc

