

# **Chaperone approval policy**

# **Introduction**

This policy does not reproduce the legislation, but it provides supplementary information on the process to approve, suspend and revoke the licence of a chaperone within South Tyneside LA.

The LA will only grant chaperone licences to individuals who live within the South Tyneside LA area.

The role of a chaperone is to safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of a child (ren) as well as to have care and control of that child / children. They are the key person who protects safeguards and supports a child under the licensing system. Chaperones are required for licensed and other approved events unless the child is under the care of their parent or the teacher who would ordinarily provide the child’s education. As an approved chaperone, the LA expects that such adults safeguard children, to prevent and report any neglect or abuse as well as to raise concerns about the safety or welfare of the child and to act where they can.

**The LA reserves the right to refuse, withdraw (or revoke) or to amend a chaperone approval if it considers it appropriate to do so.**

## **Chaperones**

The LA recognises the important role that chaperones plays in society and the LA will process applications and carry out checks to confirm the suitability to grant an approval.

## **Approval of a chaperone**

In considering if a person is suitable and competent to exercise proper control, the LA will require the applicant to attend a training session (virtual or in person) on the role of the chaperone with the Child Employment Officer (CEO) and complete online safeguarding training (Safeguarding Children Level 1). Professional Chaperone Applications are expected to complete the NSPCC Chaperone Training at their own cost.

## **Period of approval**

Chaperone licences are approved for 3 years from the issue date of a South Tyneside issued DBS certificate.

DBS checks are valid for three years from the date of application. We strongly advise all candidates to subscribe to the yearly update service within 30 days of receiving a new DBS, as this will mean they will not need to reapply for a new DBS if they switch jobs and or move to a new borough.

Candidates who don’t register with the update service will need to complete a new DBS check, during this time, their licence will be suspended until a new DBS is received and South Tyneside is not responsible for any loss of earning (Professional Chaperones only) whilst this is processed.

## **Criminal record**

The LA will consider an individual’s criminal record and other information gained by enquiry when deciding if a person is suitable to be approved or remain a chaperone.

Any person seeking to be approved as a chaperone is required to declare convictions, cautions and on-going Police or Court bail matters when they apply for an approval. Where these arise during the course of an approval, they need to declare to the CEO within seven days after they occur.

**The CEO will seek advice if these have implications for the chaperone’s approval and where appropriate they will suspend or revoke a chaperone’s approval.**

**If the local authority become aware of a criminal conviction or an on-going Police investigation not declared the CEO would seek advice from a Senior Manager or Human Resources advisor on the suspension or revoking of the chaperone approval.**

Where a chaperone has had their approval suspended, they are unable to work as a chaperone within the United Kingdom or abroad. If a chaperone does work whilst suspended, then the CEO will revoke their licence immediately and they will not be allowed to reapply for a period of up to 12 months depending on circumstances. The chaperone will be informed in writing how long the suspension will be in force for and that they must not work as a chaperone whilst suspended. If a second offence occurs whist, they are suspended their licence will be revoked indefinitely.

When considering an individual’s application, the LA will consider each case on its merits. We will take a particularly cautious view of any offence and or information involving violence against children or adults, sexual related matters against children or adults, substance misuse offences or inappropriate behaviour in relation to young people or health issues that could cause concern in respect of the role of the chaperone.

The CEO will interview the candidate where information is received from the DBS certificate on criminal activity.

Where a candidate has failed to declare a criminal offence, but it is revealed on their DBS check then the candidate will be re-interviewed by the CEO to consider if their licence will be approved or revoked.

When considering the information on an application and or the DBS check the CEO will consider the nature and seriousness of the offence and for less serious offences, the length of time since the offence occurred. The LA recognise that minor offences that occur when an individual was younger may not necessarily disbar then from approval. However, the CEO will seek advice from our Safeguarding Children Partnership and Human Resources advisors.

Where there are health issues that could affect the ability of the chaperone to provide appropriate care to children additional information may be required from GP or consultants etc. South Tyneside may seek additional advice from our Human resource advisors or may issue approval subject to certain conditions or even for a shorter period to monitor the impact on the chaperone’s ability to provide appropriate care. This will be discussed with the applicant and they will receive a written explanation of any conditions imposed.

## **Application Process**

An applicant is also expected to produce a range of documents prior to their initial interview with the CEO.

These are:

* Complete online DBS application. Email dbs@southtyneside.gov.uk and request the link and arrange a date and time to have your 3 ID documents checked.
* A completed Safeguarding Children Level 1 online certificate.
* A completed application form (online form via South Tyneside website)
* The names of two referees who can supply a character reference. The referees should not be related to the applicant and should have known them for at least a year. Where there are delays in a reference being completed, the candidate may need to supply additional referees. South Tyneside can also reserve the right to ask for additional references if those supplied are not satisfactory.
* A head and shoulders picture (this can be taken on a mobile device).
* To sign and abide by South Tyneside’s Chaperone Code of Practice.

Payment in full for the DBS check (Professionals only). Applications will not be processed if full payment is not received. Payment must be made online or by cash or cheque made contact DBS@southtyneside.gov.uk for more information how to do this.

A chaperone’s approval is not released until a DBS certificate has been received and a copy is emailed to us by you to syp@southtyneside.gov.uk.

**Where an application is withdrawn or not approved there is no refund of any charges paid to the LA.**

## **Attendance at training**

Candidates are required to attend specific chaperone training within 3 months of their approval. Candidates are welcome to attend training whilst their approval is being processed. South Tyneside arranges free training at least once a month for voluntary chaperones. Professional chaperones are to complete NSPCC Chaperone Training.

Failure to attend/complete training will result in their approval being suspended until they complete the training. **The Chaperone must not undertake paid chaperone work during this time and South Tyneside LA is not responsible for any associated loss of earnings (Professional Chaperones)**.

If a new chaperone is not able to attend training at South Tyneside within their first six weeks but can attend another borough’s training we will accept the certificate of attendance from the other borough, as long as South Tyneside is able to quality assure the training provided. South Tyneside would need to see a copy of all training materials in advance of the training and speak with the organisation providing the training before we agree to this. Any costs incurred with attending the training will be paid by the chaperone and not South Tyneside. South Tyneside will accept the NSPCC Chaperone Training.

## **Renewal of licences**

Applicants are expected to ensure the renewal of the DBS certificate and their approval are received at least six weeks in advance of the expiry date to ensure that their DBS and approval do not lapse. Responsibility for renewal rests with the individual chaperone.

## **Renewal of an existing chaperone licence**

If an application is late or incomplete, or there are concerns from the local authority, there may be insufficient time to process the DBS and or approval before the existing licence expires and there may be a period of time when the chaperone is unable to work.

**The Chaperone must not undertake voluntary or paid chaperone work during this time and South Tyneside LA is not responsible for any associated loss of earnings**.

Chaperones who do work without an approval or a DBS will have their approval suspended for a period of up to six weeks

All applications must be made on the appropriate application form and this must be fully completed.

Applicants should allow at least up to six weeks for an approval and their DBS check to be processed. At certain times of the year especially from October to December DBS may take longer due to the volume of enquiries. South Tyneside LA has no control over the time it may take for a DBS certificate to be issued.

Should concerns be raised because of the checks undertaken by South Tyneside LA the chaperone will be invited to discuss the issues and they will be informed in writing of any further action the LA will take.

**Concerns about a chaperone**

Where there are concerns about a chaperone raised by the LA, by a parent, a child, or a production company the LA will investigate.

During any investigation, the LA may decide to suspend the chaperone’s approval whilst any investigation is undertaken. Chaperones are required to attend any meetings to discuss the concerns. A chaperone will be able to bring a friend / supporter to the meeting if they have given prior indication. It is not appropriate to bring along a legal representative.

Where it is felt that an approval will be revoked, the candidate will be invited to a formal meeting to explain why the LA has taken this action.

Where it is felt that an approval should be suspended whilst the chaperone attends further training / re-training the chaperone will be invited to a meeting to explain the associated deadlines.

**During the period of suspension, the Chaperone must not undertake voluntary or paid chaperone work during this time and South Tyneside LA is not responsible for any associated loss of earnings**.

**Chaperones are required to contact South Tyneside LA if they have been dismissed from a production for safeguarding issues at the earliest opportunity so that their approval can be reviewed and any appropriate advice guidance or training is offered or depending on the seriousness of the incident the approval may be suspended or revoked. Failure to do so may result in the LA revoking or suspending the chaperones approval.**

**Chaperones should also raise any concerns about other chaperone and or members of the production crew with the safeguarding lead on the production. You can also seek advice from South Tyneside LA should you have concerns about a member of the production.**

## **Code of Conduct**

South Tyneside has introduced a Code of Conduct for our chaperones. New chaperones will sign the Code of Conduct before their approval is issued. Existing chaperones will be required to sign the code of conduct when they next renew their approval and will sign and return a scanned copy of this document before they are issued with a new approval. Chaperones with a valid approval who do not wish to sign the code of conduct will not have their approval renewed but can continue to act as a chaperone until the expiry date on their approval. At that point we will remove them from our approval list and they should cease to be employed as a chaperone. To obtain a new approval they would need to submit a new application form and follow the process for new applicants which will include, references, training and signing of the code of conduct.

## **DBS Fees for chaperones**

Chaperone DBS check £54 including ID approval (Professional Chaperones only).

There is no charge for Voluntary Chaperone DBS applications.

Please confirm costs and how to pay when you book a DBS with DBS@southtyneside.gov.uk

## **Chaperone training**

Training is free.

**I confirm I have read and understood my responsibilities as a Chaperone and signed the Code of Conduct.**

**I will notify the CEO if there are any changes to my circumstances, including health issues, arrests, and bail conditions and or safeguarding concerns relating to my immediate family members or myself.**

Chaperone’s signature

Chaperone’s name:

Date:

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Parent / Chaperone Checklist

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Production |  |
| Main contact Including Telephone number  |  |
| 1. Changing room / dressing rooms / other e.g. trailers / green rooms
 |
| * Are they clean?
* Is there extra cleaning and PPE available for children and adults
* Are they safe?
* Are boys and girls over five using different rooms? (Alternatively, what arrangement are there?)
* Are they too hot or too cold?
* Is there enough room?
* Do adults use them at the same time as children?

(Children should ideally have their own facilities)* Are there freestanding heaters / fans/ cables etc. that may be a trip hazard?
* Is clothing suitable for the climate the child is performing in?
* If filming in inclement weather are there enough towels / warm clothing / change of clothes etc.?
* What the arrangements for moving around the venue / location?
* Is social distancing being practiced?
 |
| 1. Toilets / showers
 |
| * Are they clean? Is there extra cleaning?
* Are they separate to adults where possible? Or
* Do adults as well as children use them?
* If so, what are the arrangements for the child?
* Are children escorted to and from toilets and showers?
 |
| 1. Signing in and out
 |
| * Is there a signing in/out sheet at the stage door/with the location manager?
* Who is responsible for this?

Are children allowed to go out/off set on their own? If so, who agreed this and is there a signed permission slip?* Are there additional Covid measures in place?
 |
| 1. Around the venue
 |
| * Are the hallways/landings/stairs safe and free from obstruction?

If not, what can be done? (Request production move items/change route etc.)* Do you need to remind the child of any hazards?
* Who and where is the first aider/nurse/medic?
* Where is the first aid box?
* Have there been any injuries/illnesses you need to be aware of? Any allergies?
* Where is the child’s emergency contact number held?
* Where is the nearest fire exit to the child?
* Where is the fire assembly area?

What are the procedures in event on a major incident at the venue or in the vicinity? |
| **Children should not perform if they are ill or feel unwell** **Please check hours and breaks are adhered to as per performance table** |
| 1. Travel to and from venue / location?
 |
| * Is a chaperone collecting your child or are you traveling by taxi or public transport?
* Are there additional Covid measures in place e.g. PPE, wearing masks whilst travelling on public transport and in taxis?
* Do you have times of when child is collected?
* Do you have the name of the person collecting the child?
* Has the named person shown up to collect the child? (Ask for ID if not sure)
* Do you have the name / telephone number of the transport provider?
* Are you expected to go with the child? (Should not travel on their own)
* Do you have the emergency contact numbers?
* Have you checked names and done a headcount for the number of children and people on your transport? (if you have more, or less children than expected, or have concerns about transport arrangements speak to production urgently).
 |
| 1. Food and Drink
 |
| * Is food and drink provided?
* If child usually brings their own and forgets what do you do?
* Is food and drink stored in a clean area? Are there Covid measures in place?
* Is cutlery and crockery clean?
* Do the children have any allergies?
* Do they need any special treatment, can you administer it?
* Where the treatment is kept e.g. epipen?
 |
| 1. Activities off stage / on location
 |
| * Has the child got schoolwork to do / or a tutor session to attend or online?
* Have they brought some books, games etc. to keep themselves occupied during breaks?
* What content are they accessing via smart devices?
 |
| 1. Performance on stage / on location
 |
| * Does each child have a licence – have you seen it? If you have asked several times and it has never been produced, they may not have one! (Chaperones only)
* Are there any restrictions / conditions on it? (Check licence to see if there are any conditions on it)
* What time are they expected to finish? Is this within the permitted hours?
* What is the child role and what are they doing?
* Do they need any special equipment during the performance?
* Have they been shown how to use it?
* Is there a risk assessment – have you seen it? Does it mention Covid measures put in place? Are they being followed by cast and crew?
* Do you feel unsure about the role / activity the child is doing?
 |
| Action taken to resolve any difficulties or concerns  |
| **Children Protection****Always ask yourself – Are children safe, happy, and well?** **If in doubt speak to the Child Employment Officer for your borough or when an inspection is carried out.** **You are there to protect the welfare of the child not the production schedule.** **If concerns are raised about a professional chaperone’s ability to protect children, it could lead to your chaperone’s licence being revoked.** **If you have concerns about another chaperone or member of the crew, please report it to the production safeguarding lead or seek advice from your LA** |
| **Chaperone’s / Parent’s signature**  |
| **Date completed:**  |

**If you have concerns about the welfare of your child, please raise concerns with the production in the first instance.**

**If you are unable to resolve difficulties, please contact South Tyneside Child Employment Officer 0191 4247400 or Email** **SYP@southtyneside.gov.uk**

**Covid Update 2021**

**Guidance on Covid 19 is subject to change at short notice. Please check the latest government guidance. Please also check the guidance where the performance will take place as that might differ from where the child lives.**

**Productions are requested to produce risk assessments which explain the processes and steps they are putting in place to keep the cast and crew safe and it should identify the risk for the child as well. Ask to see it if you have not received a copy.**

**If you feel a production is not adhering to the risk assessment or you have concerns and you are unable to resolve them, please contact us as above.**