Policy on Calgary Outlink's Use of Police Information Check & Vulnerable Sector Checks

PURPOSE

Calgary Outlink has used a variety of 'checks' over the years, often substituting the terminology of the check being utilized, without consideration for the type of information that is needed, the purpose of the information.

Further, Calgary Outlink has utilized police forces to provide this information, without consideration of the complex and difficult history that the queer history has with policing.

Further, some checks are required by legislation given the nature of the work that Calgary Outlink undertakes. And that as of August 15, 2021 Calgary Outlink is not aware of any requirement(s) to have its volunteers and employees undertake any specific check.

Further, Calgary Outlink wants to mitigate and where possible eliminate risks to our staff, clients, and the organization as a whole. These risks can include, but at not limited to, sexual assault, violent "incidents", murder, bulling/harrassment, and financial fraud.

PERSONS AFFECTED

The Calgary Outlink Board of Directors, Staff, Volunteers, and Clients.

TERMINOLOGY

1. Canadian Criminal Record Checks - Will determine if you have been charged or convicted of a crime. If a name-based criminal record check does not provide a definite way of confirming your identity, you may be asked to provide fingerprints. The use of fingerprints is the most accurate way to confirm a person's identity. They ensure that individuals cannot evade their criminal past, and protect individuals from being falsely associated with a criminal record that is not theirs.[1]
2. Police Information Checks - Information is searched from three databases and the results will be provided on a Calgary Police Service certificate letter. Disclosure will include Canada-wide Criminal Record History, Vulnerable Sector Search (if required) and Police History; this includes Local Police Information and Alberta Provincial court records.[2]
3. Vulnerable Sector Checks - A vulnerable sector verification determines if individuals working with the vulnerable sector have a sexual offence conviction for which they've received a pardon.[3]

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[1] Royal Candian Mounted Police - https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/criminal-record-checks
[2] Calgary Police Services - https://www.calgary.ca/cps/public-services/police-information-checks.html
[3] Calgary Police Services - https://www.calgary.ca/cps/public-services/vulnerable-sector-searches.html

4. <u>Intervention Record Checks</u> - Intervention Record Checks to professionals who want to work with children or youth, or adults applying to become a foster caregiver, kinship caregiver, or adoptive parent to a child or youth.[4]

<u>CALGARY OUTLINK'S WORK</u>
1. Volunteer Activities
   a. Peer Support Groups - Outlink runs a variety of social and support groups for community members.
   b. 1-on-1 Peer Support - Volunteers provide direct peer support over the phone, online, and in person.
   c. Education,Outreach, & Events - Volunteers may support community outreach and awareness activities through things like tabling at events. They may also lead workshops or activities or support in the planning and running of events.
2. Staff Activities
   a. Peer Support (either drop-in or by appointment) - This involves email, phone, video call, text social media messaging and in-person support when available.
   b. Informal Resource Navigation and Referral - Staff support service users in finding information and services.
   c. Administerial and Logistic Related Activities - Staff manage all day to day operational activities at Calgary Outlink.
   d. Education - Outlink provides education and workshop to community members, other organizations, and businesses on a number of topics related to gender and sexual diversity.
   e. Outreach & Events - Staff may go out to community events or engage in direct outreach activities to spread awareness or garner support for the organization and its activities. Staff may also participate in or organize events and activities that help further the organization's mission.
3. Executive & Board Activities
   a. Board Meetings - The Board meets to provide oversight into the governance of the organization, including, but are not limited to, reviewing financial statements and responding to requests/events.
   b. Committee Meetings - The Board also directs some of its work to topic-specific committees.
4. Fundraising Activities
   a. Casino Volunteering - Calgary Outlink engages in a partnership with Casinos to generate funds for the operation of the organization. This requires the organization to provide volunteers (people power) to the casino and in exchange receives money.

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4 Inform Alberta - https://informalberta.ca/public/service/serviceProfileStyled.do?serviceQueryId=1050354

b. Other fundraising activities - Calgary Outlink may participate in any number of fundraising activities that may involve direct participation from volunteers, staff, and board. This could include running events, preparing letters, making calls, and taking payments and personal information.

POLICY STATEMENT

Confidentiality of Information

- Nothing unto itself will disqualify a person from participation in Calgary Outlink. The key element is the context related to any "incident."
- Should an "incident" be reported, the individual will be invited to engage in a discussion with a member of the Board and a staff person. The purpose of this discussion shall be for the purpose of providing further context and engaging in a discussion regarding how the incident might relate to the business of Calgary Outlink.
- This conversation shall be confidential, and the content of it, including the outcome of the conversation, shall only be accessible by i) the senior staff person, ii) the Board member that engaged in the conversation, iii) the staff person that engaged in the conversation (if different from the senior staff person), and iv) the applicant.

Warning regarding Engaging with Calgary Police Service (CPS)

- In some cases, Calgary Outlink may request that an individual obtain a Police Information Check and/or a Vulnerable Sector Check and that engagement with CPS would be necessary. These checks will only be requested as a last resort and/or if required by an external funder or legislative requirement.
- In undertaking these checks, Calgary Outlink recognizes that the process may be harmful to the individuals that engage with CPS. Further, Calgary Outlink recognizes that information provided to CPS may become known to Calgary Outlink. Calgary Outlink will attempt to mitigate all negative aspects of these checks. The mitigation attempts can include, but are not limited to:
  - Accompanying individuals through the process,
  - Correcting CPS when misgendering occurs,
  - Correcting CPS when deadnaming occurs,
  - Covering all costs associated with the check(s), and
  - Maintaining the confidentiality of information (e.g. previous names of individuals) that Calgary Outlink becomes aware of.

PROCEDURES

Calgary Outlink's Alternatives to Police Checks

- Any Calgary Outlink policy/procedure/document/etc. that refers to either a "Canadian Criminal Record Checks," or "Intervention Record Checks" shall henceforth be interpreted to mean "Police Information Checks" and/or "Vulnerable Sector Checks."

- Prior to asking an individual to obtain a Police Information Check and/or a Vulnerable Sector Check, Calgary Outlink shall outline to the individual(s) what the needs are, and how a Police Information Check and/or Vulnerable Sector Check will meet those needs,
- Prior to asking an individual to obtain a Police Information Check and/or a Vulnerable Sector Check, Calgary Outlink shall attempt to satisfy its needs using alternative methods. These methods can include, but are not limited to:
  - External references that speak to the individual's ability to perform duties,
  - Training related to the individual's duties and the associated risks,
  - Completion of an intake interview,
  - Regular reviews assessing if a concern has taken place, and/or
  - Effective policy that allows concerns to be raised.

REVISION HISTORY
- October 18, 2021: New Policy.