



DBS Checks

What they are and who needs them

DBS checks are a type of criminal background check done by The Disclosure and Barring Service used in England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, to help employers make safe decisions when hiring people over the age of 16.

A DBS check will result in a certificate being issued. The employer can request to see this, to ensure that whoever they are recruiting is suitable.

The process of sharing your certificate with employers is made simpler through the DBS Update Service. More information can be found in our 'DBS Update Service' document.

There are four different types of DBS check, which have different uses (and costs!) The type of check you may need depends on your circumstances and employment.

Basic DBS check - suitable for any purpose, including employment. The certificate will contain details of convictions and conditional cautions that are considered to be unspent. Anyone can apply for a Basic check through the DBS online application route. Alternatively, an employer can apply for a basic check on an individual's behalf (with their approval).

Standard DBS check - suitable for certain jobs, such as a security guard. This certificate will contain details of both spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands, and warnings that are held on the Police National Computer. This check needs to be requested by a recruiting organisation.

Enhanced DBS check - suitable for (mostly) people working with children or adults in certain circumstances. The certificate will contain the same details as a standard certificate, and may contain non-conviction information supplied by relevant police forces. This check needs to be requested by a recruiting organisation.

Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS check - suitable for the same circumstances as the 'Enhanced DBS check'. The certificate will contain the same information as an Enhanced DBS certificate, but will also include a check of one or both Barred Lists. If an individual is on a Barred List, they are no longer allowed to work with this group of people (including volunteering).

Recruiters must be entitled by law to ask an individual to reveal their full criminal history, and should only request a DBS check when they are allowed to do so. The DBS eligibility tool can help you find out which check is suitable: <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>

Why is this relevant to our work?

Anybody working with young or vulnerable people is required to have an Enhanced DBS certificate, even when there are other adults present or if you are volunteering. For instance, if you are hosting workshops or classes, working in schools, or working with people who experience poor mental health. An Enhanced DBS certificate can be required by venues or companies before they agree to work with you..

Though a DBS check does not expire, many employers will require this check to be less than 3 years old (this could be even less when working in schools or care). Some employers may require a completely new check to be done if you are changing employment, but again this is often avoided if you have a live subscription with the 'update' service, and can help you keep track of your certificate too (more in our previously signposted document) .

Further information on DBS checks and their use, legislation, and costs can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>