



Disclosure &
Barring Service

THE DBS UPDATE SERVICE

PART OF YOUR SAFER
RECRUITMENT AND SAFER
EMPLOYMENT TOOLKIT







WHAT IS THE UPDATE SERVICE?

The Update Service is an online subscription service available to individuals who hold a Standard or Enhanced DBS certificate. It provides greater portability of those certificates by letting organisations carry out free, instant online checks to view the status of the existing certificate.

DBS will conduct regular searches on these certificates to see if any new information has come to light since it was issued. The frequency of these searches varies depending on the type of information.

This guide covers:

- how does the Update Service fit into safer recruitment and safer employment practices?
- how frequently searches on the update service are carried out
- when and how to conduct a status check
- when to take action
- how to find further support



HOW DOES THE UPDATE SERVICE FIT INTO SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SAFER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES?

The DBS Update Service forms an important part of safer recruitment and safer employment practices but should not be used in isolation.

It enables organisations to carry out online status checks on eligible DBS certificates, helping organisations maintain confidence that safeguarding information remains current throughout employment.

Using the Update Service can support ongoing workforce assurance, strengthen safeguarding arrangements, and complement robust recruitment, vetting, and employment monitoring processes.

Organisations should use it alongside safer recruitment and employment practices including, but not limited to:

- scrutiny of employment history, including investigating gaps, inconsistencies, and unexplained periods of unemployment
- verification of identity, right to work, qualifications, and professional registrations where relevant
- obtaining, validating and carefully considering references, preferably from current or recent employers, before appointment
- assessment of suitability and conduct, including consideration of any safeguarding concerns identified through checks, references, or information shared by other sources

Organisations can decide whether to accept an existing certificate that is subscribed to the Update Service.



If an employer chooses to incorporate DBS Update Service status checks into their safer employment practices, regular status checks can support ongoing workforce assurance by identifying whether new information has been added to an individual's DBS record since their certificate was issued.



FREQUENCY OF SEARCHES

There is no prescribed frequency for carrying out status checks. Organisations should determine an appropriate risk-based schedule taking into consideration things such as:

- the nature of the role
- level of potential risk
- regulatory requirements
- safeguarding policies

When a person adds their DBS certificate to their Update Service account, DBS will search regularly to see if any new information has come to light since it was issued. The frequency of these searches varies depending on the level and type of certificate.

• **criminal conviction information**

DBS will search for new information on a weekly basis. If information is found that would be included in a DBS check this will trigger a status change

• **Barred List information**

DBS will search for new information on a weekly basis. If the person has been added to a relevant Barred List since the certificate was issued, this will trigger a status change

- **non-conviction information**

DBS will search for new information every 9 months and if potential information is found, will ask the police to decide whether it ought to be disclosed in the same way we do for new DBS checks. If the police confirm that it would be included in a DBS check, this will trigger a status change

DBS won't notify you if a status changes - you will need to carry out periodic checks of a certificate with the individual's consent to establish if changes have occurred. DBS recommends that you consider the frequency of these checks based on risk factors for your organisation and the role the individual is undertaking.





WHEN AND HOW TO CONDUCT A STATUS CHECK

An organisation may conduct a free status check on an individual's certificate if:

- the organisation/employer has the individual's consent
- the organisation/employer could legally request a new DBS check for the role that the individual is applying for
- the existing certificate is for the same workforce and level of DBS check required

Prior to conducting a status check for the first time organisations will need to complete certain actions as set out in DBS' [Update Service Employer Guide](#).

To conduct a status check you will need to log in to the [DBS Update Service](#) and provide certain information including reading and agreeing to a legal declaration.



WHEN TO ACT

You should take action when you receive a status check result that states, “This DBS certificate is no longer current. Please apply for a new DBS check to get the most up-to-date information”.

This indicates that new information has come to light since the certificate was issued. To see this new information a new DBS check will need to be applied for. This status change could be due to:

- **conviction Information:** new convictions, adult cautions and unspent conditional cautions being added to police records or an amendment to current convictions, adult cautions and unspent convictions and cautions
- **non-conviction information:** for Enhanced DBS certificates the status change may also be due to new, relevant non-conviction police information
- **Barred List information:** for Enhanced certificates that include a check against a Barred List the status change may be due to the individual being added to a Barred List

If the status check reveals that there has been a change, it is recommended that you have a discussion with the individual about the reason(s) as to why there has been a change.

If the certificate included a check of a Barred List an [early confirmation check](#) will let you find out if a status has changed because the individual has been added to a Barred List. You must have the right to know the outcome of the Barred List check and have the applicant’s consent.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Regional Outreach team

The Outreach team at the Disclosure and Barring Service work regularly with other organisations, to collaborate and share key messages among the safeguarding community. Our team of Regional Outreach Advisers provide dedicated support to organisations within their allocated region. Advisers work with organisations and networks within their region in several ways, including:

- answering DBS related queries
- e-learning and [podcasts](#)

- providing training and conferences
- providing workshops and webinars
- sharing DBS news and information

If you have any questions or would like any further support, please contact your Regional Outreach Adviser or [send an email](#) to us.

