

Best Practice
Guidance:

DBS Checks in the Voluntary Sector



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Thank you for downloading our latest eBook 'Best Practice Guidance: DBS Checks in the Voluntary Sector.' Having a fit for purpose DBS checking process isn't just about box ticking. DBS Checks are there to help protect you, your organisation and those in your care.

In this guide, we will look at the key information you need to ensure your organisation is processing DBS Checks in a safe and compliant way.

Hello and Welcome



“Over the past 2 years, the UK has experienced some of the most trying times in recent history. Whilst it has been an incredibly challenging time for the nation, the hardship has also brought out some of the best in people. The number of people volunteering their time to help others has skyrocketed.”

“This is reflected in the number of DBS Checks carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). 2020 saw an increase of 6% in the number of reduced rate DBS Checks issued to the voluntary sector. This equates to nearly a million Standard and Enhanced DBS Checks.”

“However, the number of DBS Checks issued for volunteers is likely much higher. The figure from the DBS Annual Report doesn’t account for the number of Basic DBS Checks issued to volunteers. Whatever the true figure is, it’s been inspiring to see the people of the UK helping to support a range of causes over the past couple of years.”

Personnel Checks have been helping support a range of charities, non-profits and voluntary organisations for a number of years. This is why we’ve put together this guide, to help support those organisations that dedicate themselves to supporting others.

- Jack Mellor: Managing Director

DBS Checks for the Voluntary Sector.

There are a few different types of DBS Checks that organisations need for their staff and volunteers. In this section we'll look at those checks in more detail.



Types of DBS Check

Basic, Standard, Enhanced and Volunteer DBS checks

There are a few different types of DBS Checks that organisations need for their staff and volunteers. In this section we'll look at those checks in more detail.



Enhanced DBS Checks

Enhanced DBS Checks are the highest level of DBS Check available in the UK. This level of check checks an applicant's criminal history for cautions, warnings, reprimands and convictions (both spent and unspent).

Local police will also add any relevant notes they hold on the applicant. They use their discretion to determine whether the information is relevant, depending on the nature of the work the applicant is involved in.

The Enhanced DBS Check may also include a search of the DBS's Children's and/or Adult Barred List. The Enhanced DBS Check is reserved for roles where a person is directly caring for children or vulnerable adults or fulfil a role managing people who do.



Standard DBS Checks

Standard DBS Checks are used to check an applicant's criminal history for cautions, warnings and reprimands as well as spent and unspent convictions. They are only used in certain circumstances, such as obtaining certain licences or when becoming a chartered accountant or solicitor. This makes them quite rare in the voluntary sector.



Basic DBS Checks

A Basic DBS Check or Basic Disclosure is a search against the Police National Computer (PNC). This level of DBS Check will reveal any unspent convictions and conditional cautions on someone's record.

No criteria need to be met before someone can apply for a Basic DBS Check. These checks are usually carried out on paid staff or volunteers who don't meet the requirements of the Standard or Enhanced DBS Check.

Despite the heading for this section, there is technically no such thing as a Volunteer DBS Check. Volunteer DBS is a term commonly used to describe Standard or Enhanced DBS Checks processed for volunteers. The only two differences are the reduced cost of the check and the eligibility criteria that need to be met (more on that later).

Basic DBS Checks hold no eligibility criteria, meaning they are available to anyone. The criteria for Standard or Enhanced DBS Checks are very strict.

The most common reasons that someone would be eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check are list below:

Children

- ✓ Providing teaching, training, or instruction to children
- ✓ Are directly responsible for caring or supervising children.
- ✓ Providing any form of advice or guidance relating to a child's physical, emotional, or educational well-being.

Vulnerable Adults

- ✓ Providing personal care to an adult who cannot care for themselves due to age, illness and/or disability.
- ✓ Providing health care to a vulnerable adult.
- ✓ Providing day to day help to adults with running their homes because their age, illness or disability means they need this help, and where it includes at least one of the following: managing their cash; paying their bills; doing their shopping.

The above lists are by no means comprehensive. [You can find the full guidance here.](#)

Standard DBS Checks are quite rare in the voluntary sector, but they can be needed in certain circumstances. The list below covers the most common reasons someone would need a Standard DBS Check:

- ✓ Any employment or other work which is carried out for the purposes of an adoption service or a fostering agency where a person may have contact with children or their records.
- ✓ Any employment which is concerned with the administration of, or is otherwise normally carried out wholly or partly within the precincts of a prison, a remand centre, a removal centre, a short term holding facility, a detention centre, a Borstal institution or a young offenders institution and members of boards of visitors. Any role involving the provision of healthcare which does not meet the eligibility criteria of the Enhanced DBS Check.
- ✓ Any role involving the provision of healthcare which does not meet the eligibility criteria of the Enhanced DBS Check.

[You can find the full list of Standard DBS eligibility criteria here.](#)

If you have volunteers working for your organisation, and they meet the criteria of the Standard or Enhanced DBS Check, they may be entitled to a Volunteer DBS Check. To be eligible for this type of check they need to meet the DBS definition of a volunteer.

The DBS Definition of a Volunteer

It's important to clarify that the DBS definition of a volunteer may be different to your own. The DBS definition of a true volunteer, would be someone that answers 'No' to the following 4 questions:

1. Is the applicant in receipt of any payment (except for travel and other.
2. Is the applicant on a Placement/Work Experience?
3. Is the applicant on a course that requires them to do this job role?
4. Is the applicant in trainee position that will lead to a full-time role/ qualification?

DBS eligibility can be a complicated and confusing area of legislation. Each job role needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the correct checks are carried out.

If you need any help or advice about what level of DBS Check you need, give us a call on 01254 355688



The DBS Update Service

The DBS Update Service (DBSUS) is a subscription service run by the DBS. Signing up to this means that applicants gain a level of portability over their DBS check(s).



The DBS Update Service

This service is charged at £13p.a. and by subscribing to this service, applicants can:

- 1 Add/Remove DBS Certificates**
- 2 View employers who have checked the status of a certificate**
- 3 Amend their contact details.**

The key aim of the update service is to improve the speed and ease of the recruitment process for those within regulated industries. The DBSUS allows organisations to view a candidates existing DBS certificate and prevents the need for completing additional checks.

How Can Candidates and Employees Sign Up?

1

Signing up is a simple process and individuals can do it before a certificate is issued. Once an application has arrived with the DBS, they will send the applicant an E-Reference number. This reference number can be used to sign up.

2

Applicants can also choose to wait for their certificate to arrive. Each certificate has a unique disclosure number, and this can also be used to

Certificate holders only have 30 days to sign up from the date of issue. Considering the DBS certificate can take up to two weeks to arrive, it's best to do this immediately upon receiving it.

To find the registration portal, either type 'DBS Update Service' into a search engine and look for the .gov website Alternatively, [you can follow this link.](#)

Organisations have no obligation to make their staff or volunteers sign up to the DBSUS. However, it may save you both time and money in the future.

Carrying out Status Checks

A Status Check is simply how you look up a subscriber's certificate information online to check for new information.

To do so, you would follow this link. You would then need to enter the following information:

- ✓ Your organisation name
- ✓ Your forename
- ✓ Your surname

Once you've entered this, the DBS system would ask you for the candidate's certificate information, as listed below:

- ✓ DBS Certificate Number
- ✓ Surname as it appears on the certificate
- ✓ DOB as it appears on

The DBSUS would then show any updates regarding the certificate in questions. The DBSUS will not show the original certificate. For a subscription to the DBSUS to be valid, the certificate holder needs to retain the original certificate. You must have seen this before carrying out a Status Check.



Volunteer DBS Checks and the Update Service

Registration to the DBSUS means that a DBS certificate is essentially portable between employers. Before accepting an existing DBS certificate, which is registered to the DBSUS, organisations need to be sure of a couple of things:

- ✓ Obtain consent from the individual in question that you can carry out a Status Check of their existing DBS Check. Examine the original DBS Certificate. If the candidate cannot provide this, their DBSUS subscription is invalid, and you cannot accept it.
- ✓ Confirm the DBS Certificate matches the individual's identity
- ✓ Ensure that the level of DBS Check is appropriate to the job they are applying for.

The last point is key when accepting an existing DBS Certificate. Not only does the level of DBS Check need to be the same, but it also needs to have the correct Workforce and Barred List included.

Some DBS Certificates will disclose criminal history and barring information that is only relevant for working with adults. Some will only contain information relating to children.

Accepting an existing DBS Certificate of the wrong level or type can be a safeguarding risk because a recruitment decision would be made without all the relevant information.

Volunteer DBS Checks are also bound by different rules to ordinary DBS Checks. Volunteers can register their DBS Certificate to the Update Service free of charge and the subscription automatically renews.

However, this subscription cannot be used for any other employer or voluntary organisation. If the individual became a paid member of staff, or volunteered elsewhere, a new DBS Check would need to be carried out.

[For more information about the DBS Update Service, click here.](#)



Managing DBS Check Data

In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, any organisation carrying out DBS Checks needs a formal written policy on the secure handling of any information provided (electronically or otherwise).

This policy needs to be clearly made available to any recruit or employee that a provider intends to run a DBS Check on.



What can be recorded?

Your organisation is allowed to record the following information:

The date of issue of a disclosure



The name of the subject



The type of disclosure



The position for which the disclosure was requested



The unique reference number of the disclosure



The details of the recruitment decision taken



How to store DBS Data

Disclosure information should be kept separately to an applicant's personnel file. Their DBS information should be kept securely, in a lockable, non-portable storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it. This can be a physical or digital container.

Avoiding Fraud

Charities and other organisations in the voluntary sector are often seen as easy targets by fraudsters. This is even more apparent during times of crisis. The Charity Commission reported that between March and October 2020, charitable organisations lost over £3.6 million pounds through fraud.



With the rates of fraud rising in the UK, organisations in the voluntary sector, now more than ever, need to be aware of how they can protect themselves from fraud. Background checks can be an effective way to mitigate the risk of fraud.

Identity Checks

Identity fraud is one of the most common but serious problems faced in recruitment today. Identity checks use advanced technology to provide a score to indicate the degree of confidence in an individual's identity.

These checks can give you the confidence that the staff or volunteers you're engaging are exactly what they say they are.



Adverse Financial Checks

Financial Checks are a key element of determining whether a candidate is financially sound. Considering the amount that charitable organisations get defrauded, this is a prudent check to carry out. Adverse Financial Checks can help give you a clear picture of someone's financial record.

Adverse Financial Checks include information on any county court

judgements, bankruptcies, insolvencies in a candidate's history as well as including a credit report. For staff recruited with a history outside of the UK, there are overseas civil record checks as well. These can provide similar information to Adverse Financial Checks.

Media Checks

If your organisation is recruiting candidates with high-profile or public-facing roles, Media Checks are essential.

These checks provide results based on a search using an online search engine and media feeds against the candidate's full name. This will reveal any negative information that has been publicly reported on the individual.

Sanctions Checks

Sanctions Checks search for sanctions, enforcements, and warnings in the UK and worldwide. This is particularly useful in picking up on white-collar fraud that charitable organisations are susceptible to.

The search includes individuals known or suspected to be affiliated with terrorism, money laundering, fraudsters, drug trafficking, arms dealing, war crimes, white-collar fraud or other illegal activities, as well as Politically Exposed Persons (PEP's)

Processing Background Checks

Implementing a legally compliant background screening process is a complicated. Screening regulations tend to involve overlapping areas of, often contradictory, legislation.

Relying on a professional background screening organisation is the best way to ensure you get the most out of this process.



Processing Background Checks

Implementing a legally compliant background screening process is a complicated and time intensive task. Screening regulations tend to involve overlapping areas of legislation that can often be contradictory. Relying on professional background screening and compliance organisation is the best way to ensure you get the most out of this process.

Personnel Checks provide comprehensive screening services to a range of public and private sector financial institutions. We are members of several background screening trade bodies, and our managing director is the sitting vice-chair of the Criminal Record Trade Body (CRTB). Personnel Checks are at the forefront of the industry and use this position to provide better solutions for our customers.

We can assist your firm by tailoring screening packages including any of the background checks listed in this eBook. Why not join the ever-growing community of conscientious businesses that are taking the leap into background screening?

Thank you

For more information about how Personnel Checks background screening solutions can aid your organisation, get in touch! You can give us a call on **01254 355688** or drop us an email at **letstalk@personnelchecks.co.uk**