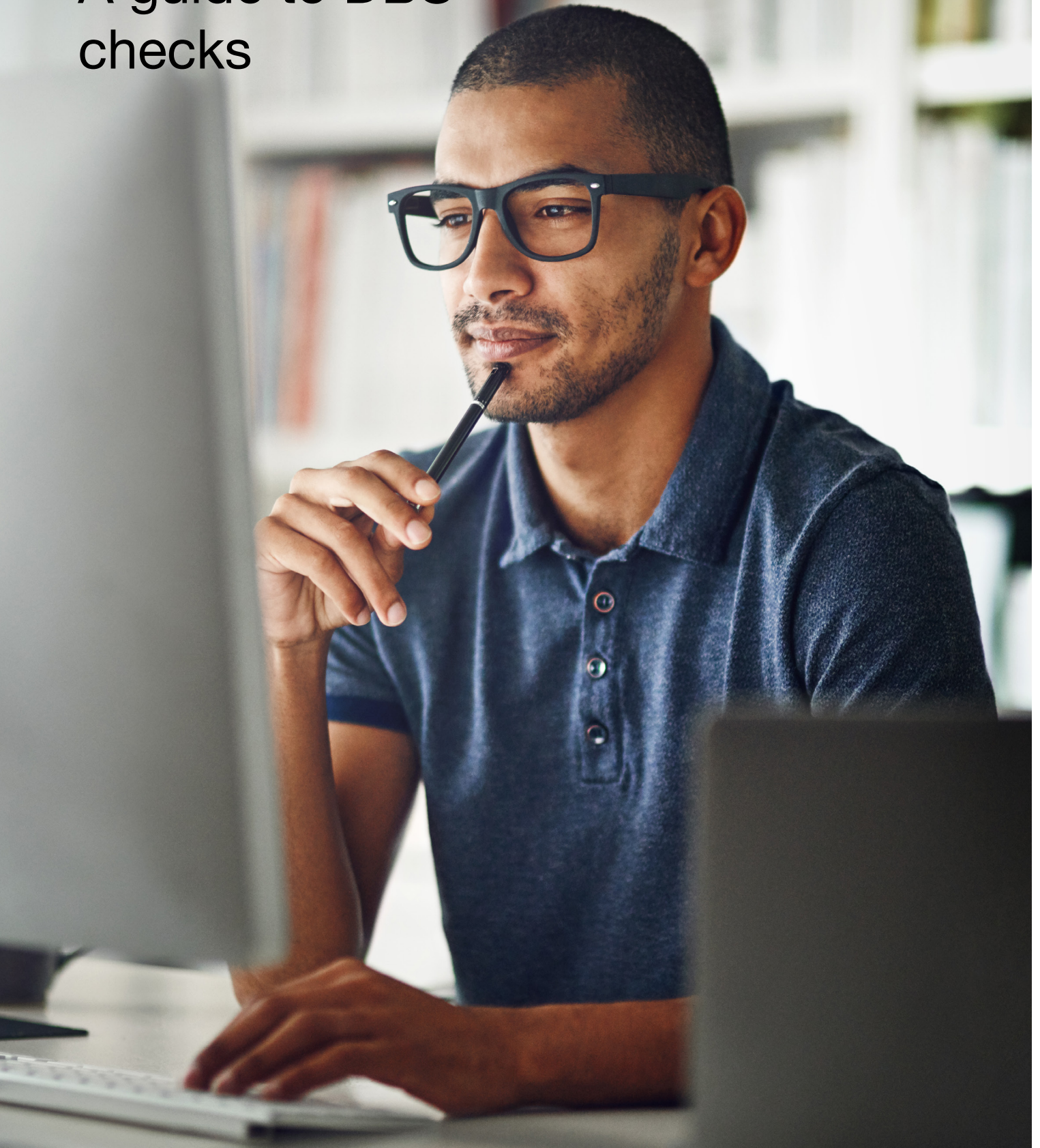




Disclosure &
Barring Service

A guide to DBS checks



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Disclaimer: This is not legal advice. If you need help with making sure you are complying with the law, you should speak to a legal adviser.

Introduction

DBS checks are carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service, also known as DBS. A DBS check is a record of a person's criminal convictions and cautions.

This leaflet provides an overview of the different types of DBS check, and how to apply for them. More information can be found on our [website](#).

What countries does DBS cover?

We provide DBS checks for people living or working in England, Wales, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. Those living or working in Scotland should apply for checks via [Disclosure Scotland](#), and those in Northern Ireland should apply via [AccessNI](#).

What types of DBS check are available from the Disclosure and Barring Service?

DBS processes four different

types of DBS check:

- a Basic DBS check
- a Standard DBS check
- an Enhanced DBS check
- an Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS check

Each type of DBS check results in a DBS certificate, and the information shown on a certificate varies, depending on the type of check you've applied for.

What information will be shown on a DBS certificate?

The information shown on each type of DBS certificate can be found on the page opposite. There is also information around what the terms within this section mean, further on in the leaflet.

What information will be shown?	Basic DBS certificate	Standard DBS certificate	Enhanced DBS certificate	Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS certificate
Unspent convictions and conditional cautions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spent convictions and cautions, subject to filtering	✗	✓	✓	✓
Relevant non-conviction information from the police	✗	✗	✓	✓
Children's and/or Adults' Barred List check	✗	✗	✗	✓
Who can apply?	Anyone over the age of 16	Eligible roles are listed in our eligible positions guidance	Eligible roles are listed in our work-force guidance	Eligible roles are listed in our work-force guidance
How do I apply?	Online only, either directly to DBS , or via a Responsible Organisation	Via a Registered Body, or Umbrella Body	Via a Registered Body, or Umbrella Body	Via a Registered Body, or Umbrella Body
Can I link to the Update Service?	✗	✓	✓	✓

What do ‘spent’ and ‘unspent’ mean?

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, many convictions or cautions become ‘spent’ after a specified length of time, known as the ‘rehabilitation period’. This means that once the rehabilitation period has been completed, they will not show on a Basic DBS certificate.

You do not need to tell anyone about a spent conviction unless you’re applying for a job where a Standard, Enhanced, or Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS check is needed. Guidance around when to tell someone about your criminal record can be found in the [‘Telling your employer about your criminal record’ guidance](#). More information around when records become spent can be found in our [rehabilitation periods guidance](#). Spent convictions and cautions will be disclosed on Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS certificates, subject to [filtering rules](#).

What does ‘filtering’ mean?

Filtering is the term that DBS uses to describe the process that identifies which criminal records will be disclosed on Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS certificates. Certain minor or old offences may not be disclosed. These are known as ‘protected offences.’

There are a lot of offences that will always be disclosed on a Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS certificate, unless they relate to a youth caution. These are known as ‘specified offences’ and are usually of a serious violent or sexual nature, or are relevant for

safeguarding vulnerable groups including children.

All convictions resulting in a custodial sentence, whether or not suspended, will always be disclosed.

Youth cautions, reprimands, and warnings will not automatically be disclosed on Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS certificates

What information can be disclosed by the police?

A chief police officer can disclose any information they may hold, if they reasonably believe it is relevant to the workforce or role that the individual will be doing, and that it ought to be disclosed.

How much do DBS checks cost, and who pays for them?

More information about DBS fees can be found on our [website](#). Your potential employer will discuss who is responsible for paying the fee, and how the fee will be paid.

Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS checks are free-of-charge for volunteers, however the organisation that submits your application may still charge a fee for processing the check. Basic DBS checks always involve a fee, even for volunteer roles.

What is DBS’ definition of a volunteer?

DBS definition of a volunteer is ‘a person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travelling and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something



which aims to benefit some third-party other than or in addition to a close relative.’

What are the DBS Barred Lists?

DBS is responsible for maintaining the Adults’ and Children’s Barred Lists. These lists include individuals that are barred from engaging in [regulated activity](#). If your work involves carrying out regulated activity with children and/or adults, or a small number of [other specified roles](#), the employer can ask for a check of one or both lists depending on which group you will be working with.

Why are the Barred Lists important?

If a person is barred from working or engaging in regulated activity with children or adults, it is against the law for them to do this, or try to do this with the group(s) that they are barred from regulated activity with. It is also against the law for someone to let them do this, if they know that the person is barred.

If an organisation employs someone in a regulated activity role, they have a legal obligation to submit a barring referral to DBS when certain conditions are met. More information about barring referrals can be found in our [barring referrals guidance](#).

What are eligible roles?

Only certain roles or types of work are eligible for a Standard, Enhanced or Enhanced with Barred List DBS check. These roles are set in legislation. More information about eligibility for the different levels of check, including our online eligibility tool can be found in our [eligibility guidance](#).

What is a Responsible Organisation?

A Responsible Organisation is an organisation that has registered with DBS to submit applications for Basic DBS checks. A [list of Responsible Organisations](#) can be found on our website.

What is a Registered Body?

A Registered Body is an organisation that has registered with DBS to submit Standard, Enhanced and Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS check applications. Some Registered Bodies also provide an ‘umbrella’ service to employers who are not registered themselves – these are known as ‘Umbrella Bodies’. A [list of Umbrella Bodies](#) can be found on our website.

I’m self-employed. Can I apply for a DBS check?

Self-employed people cannot apply for Standard, Enhanced, or Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS checks for themselves. There must be someone employed to make a decision about whether the self-employed person is suitable for the

job, for example, a contracting organisation or recruitment agency. They can however apply for a Basic DBS check.

What is the Update Service?

The Update Service is an online subscription service that enables individuals to register their Standard, Enhanced, or Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS certificate, and allows employers to check online whether the certificate is up-to-date. It costs £13 per year. More information can be found in our [Update Service guidance](#).

Overseas applicants

Offences committed overseas are not routinely disclosed on DBS checks, therefore we strongly recommend that if an individual has spent a significant amount of time overseas, a check from that country should be obtained. Information on how to obtain criminal background checks from other countries, can be found in the [‘Criminal record checks for overseas applicants’ guidance](#).



Contact:

General enquiries: customerservices@dbs.gov.uk

Corporate relations: communications@dbs.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 020 0190

Welsh Language: 0300 020 0191

Minicom: 0300 020 0192

Website: www.gov.uk/dbs