



Disclosure &
Barring Service

DBS News

February 2013



DBS News to go electronic only - Key dates - Volunteer Applications



Hello and welcome to February's edition of DBS News.

Thank you for the great feedback you've been giving us about this newsletter. We're using your opinions to refine it, so please be assured that the time you take to give us feedback is well spent. Let us know what you think at communications@dbs.gsi.gov.uk.

You may have seen media coverage in late January regarding a Court of Appeal ruling relating to disclosure of convictions. Essentially it has ruled that the law which requires people to disclose all previous convictions to certain employers is a breach of human rights.

At the time of going to print, the Home Office was seeking leave to appeal the decision. So there is no change to DBS business or processes. We have posted information from this ruling at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs-news and we want to keep you up-to-date with any developments.

However, the issue has highlighted the speed at which change can become necessary, and brought into sharp relief, the inadequacies of a print run which sees us having to agree copy more than two weeks before you receive the news. This is far from ideal and I am concerned that you may receive out-of-date information in this way, or not at all (depending on the vagaries of our postal service).

Thousands of you have already switched to our online version because you prefer to receive and share our news in electronic copy. We'll introduce a new 'breaking news' feature soon too, which we can't replicate in hard copy. Therefore, we'll soon switch to

using DBS News online only. (See page three for details.) Should you feel this will present you with any problems, please let us know at the feedback address above.

Despite the distractions of Christmas, snow and court judgements, I've been delighted that DBS has maintained a strong focus on delivery during these early days of our new organisation, and can tell you that we have maintained our public service standards. We know you depend on us to work in a timely and accurate manner, and we aim to keep it that way!

With my best wishes

**Adrienne Kelbie
Chief Executive**

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DBS News to go electronic only

Next month's edition of DBS News will be our last paper version. From April, we'll issue it electronically.

This will allow us to send you our regular news alongside any 'breaking news', so that you can be confident that the information you are using is accurate and up-to-date. This will also reduce the amount of paper we send out, and so benefit our environment.

Some of you have asked if we'll consider setting up a number of social media accounts such as Facebook to keep you posted, and we'll be exploring these options over the summer.

To receive DBS News from April, please spend a couple of minutes now to sign up:

- go to our new e-database at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs-subscribe

- give us your name, email address, and your business sector; and
- tick the DBS News box in the topics section (and any others you fancy, such as the Update Service).

And that's it - you'll never miss another edition or wonder why it's out of date again!

Please remember, from April, we will not be sending DBS News paper copies; only an electronic version. If you haven't registered on the database before then, you will not receive a paper copy.

Sign up to DBS News at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs-subscribe before April's paper copy switch off



Our Referral events

We provide free information and training events to help you understand your legal obligations and responsibilities within barring, referrals and disclosures. As well as our popular Countersignatory events, we are developing a programme of referral sessions.

These will help employers and volunteer managers who work with vulnerable groups including children to understand their legal duty to make safeguarding referrals to us.

As a reminder, this duty is triggered when:

- a member of staff has been dismissed or moved to other work not involving contact with vulnerable groups including children; or might have been if they had not left because the person has harmed or posed a risk of harm to vulnerable groups including children.

We expect our new events to cover:



- Our role, powers and functions
- The impacts brought about by recent legislative changes (Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- An overview of Regulated Activity
- The circumstances in which you should make a referral, and when
- What information you should include in a referral
- Case examples

If there's anything else you'd like us to cover, please let us know.

For further information, see our events calendar in the News and Events section of our website www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs or call Lyn Gavin or Victoria Armstrong on 01325 953714/15.

Key dates

February 2013

If you are one of our Registered Bodies who have not yet placed an order for DBS application forms, please do so now. If you do have sufficient quantities of the DBS branded forms, please do not make another order for the time being but continue to place orders according to your normal order patterns. This will help us manage the volumes of orders coming in and avoid delays to you where we can.

28 February 2013

28 February is the final date we are able to receive and process applications on the CRB branded form.

If we receive your CRB branded forms on 1 March, please know that we will not be technically or legally able to process them. We're sorry about this, but we have no leeway, and so will return them to you. You will then have to re-submit the applications using the DBS branded forms. The post can get delayed, so we suggest you use **21 February** as your last posting date for CRB branded forms.

31 March 2013

All content on the Home Office website will transfer to the GOV.UK website; including all of our DBS information that is currently held there.

This is happening because the Cabinet Office has decided that all government online content should move onto a single website to help everyone access government information and services more easily. As part of the public service family, we adhere to this strategy.

We will give you more detailed information about these website changes next month.



Preparing for the Update Service

Last month, we told you about the new Update Service and gave you an idea of what the fee might be. We have been continuing to work closely with Home Office colleagues to get ready for the new service.

We know some of you are frustrated that we have been unable to say when this service will launch, and we apologise for this. Several factors (many external) influence our ability to launch and we are reviewing these across our operation. We want to be able to give you a clear decision and are working on that; please be assured that we recognise you need a decent period of notice to implement changes across your networks.

We are preparing for the launch and will be involving many of you in our design and testing. This will help us make sure the

service looks and feels good to you, and that our guidance is what you need.

It will really help us to understand how well we've explained what the Update Service will be, how likely you are to use it and whether you will encourage applicants to join.

Ipsos MORI will carry out research about this on our behalf, so if they contact you, please do take part if you can spare a little time.

Helps us get the Update Service right:
If Ipsos MORI approach you, tell them what you want! Sign up to be the first to get Update Service details at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs-subscribe.

The screenshot shows the 'The Update Service' page. At the top left is the Disclosure & Barring Service logo. Below it, a large photo of a young girl smiling while holding a pencil. The main content area has two sections: 'Log in' and 'Subscribe to the Update Service?'. The 'Log in' section includes fields for 'Update Service ID' and 'Date of birth', with a 'Log in' button. The 'Subscribe to the Update Service?' section includes a 'What is this?' link, a date input field ('DD/MM/YYYY'), and a 'Subscribe to the Update Service' button. At the bottom, there's a note about the service reducing the need to apply for multiple certificates and a link to a status check. A footer at the very bottom includes links for 'Watch language version', 'About The Update Service', and 'Terms and conditions'.

Volunteer Applications

We recognise the value of volunteers to many organisations who have safeguarding at heart. We process volunteer disclosure applications free-of-charge, and have committed to making our Update Service free for volunteers too.

20%-25% of the applications we receive are for voluntary positions, and this figure has remained steady year on year.

Since our costs still need to be recovered, everyone who pays for a disclosure is effectively subsidising the free checks. So we really rely on you to make a careful decision when submitting the application form for a volunteer.

A volunteer, as defined by the DBS, is:

'A person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel 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.'

To qualify for a free-of-charge volunteer check, please be certain that the applicant does not directly benefit from the position the DBS application is being submitted for. The applicant must not:

- receive any payment (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses);
- be on a placement;
- be on a course that requires them to do this job role; and/or
- be in a trainee position that will lead to a full-time role/qualification.

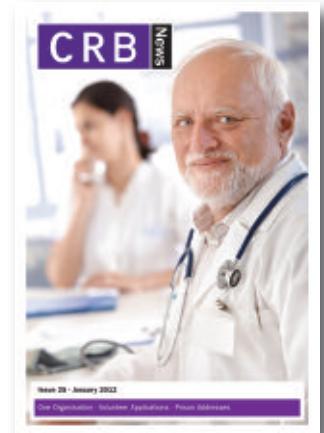
In the last year, our sampling found that 88%

of volunteer applications were correct. For the 12% of applications which were submitted incorrectly, we have offered feedback and support to help avoid the same problem, and applied the appropriate charge. Many of you have told us that you find this feedback really helpful – and we're grateful for your support.

We were therefore deeply disappointed in January to have to take unprecedented action to strike off a Registered Body for knowingly submitting inappropriate volunteer applications. We also referred its Lead Signatory to the police. DBS will not tolerate misuse of our free volunteer checks.

We know that, ultimately, it is your responsibility to determine whether each application fulfils the criteria for a free-of-charge volunteer check; but we will always want to help you get that right so if you need any advice, please just ask.

Further information including case studies are in the CRB News January 2012 edition held on our website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications.



Help reduce Section y errors

We know it is inconvenient and time consuming for you to have to handle errors on the application form, so when mistakes are made, we rely on your help to prevent them being repeated.

Section y errors are a particularly persistent problem. Since February last year, out of 379,500 errors we have received, 58,800 of them relate to section y.

It's a real shame that these same errors keep happening as we know incorrect applications have an impact on your recruitment processes. These inevitably lead to delays in turn-around times whilst we return the forms to you, so that we can confirm the correct information.

So here's our top three error tips to avoid this happening:

Countersignatory number (section y70)

We can reduce the number of these types of errors if you carefully check that:

- This field is filled in and is legible
- You fill in your Countersignatory number keeping inside the boxes, making sure all

the digits are correct

- The first six digits of your Countersignatory number match up with your Registered Body number (section y69)

Declaration by Registered Person (section y72)

For the application form to be processed, you must carefully check that:

- This section is signed by yourself and the signature does not go outside of the box.

Your signature here is extremely important as you are signing to confirm that the information you have provided in support of the application is complete and true.

Date of Countersignature (section y73)

Please check carefully that:

- This field is filled in and is legible
- The date is completed using the correct format of dd/mm/yyyy (date/month/year)

Contact

For Disclosure issues and information, please phone:

Customer Services 0870 90 90 811

Minicom line 0870 90 90 344

Llinell Gymraeg 0870 90 90 223

For Barring issues and information, please phone:

01325 953 795.

As a newly merged organisation, we have two different telephone systems so we're really sorry that we can't transfer your call between our offices

Use our online tracking service to check the progress of DBS applications by visiting

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs-online-tracking.