Disclosure & Barring Service

# DBS Update Service
## Applicant guide

September 2013

# Contents

1. Introduction ..... 3
2. Quick guides ..... 5
3. Frequently asked questions ..... 7
4. Terms, conditions and exclusions ..... 16

# 1. Introduction

You can subscribe to the Update Service when you next apply for a DBS check, and you may never need to apply for another one again.

## What is the DBS Update Service?

For a small annual subscription of just £13 (free for volunteers) you can have your DBS Certificate kept up-to-date and take it with you from role to role, within the same workforce, where the same type and level of check is required.

By subscribing to the new service you could save yourself a lot of time and money depending upon how many DBS checks you have needed in the past.

## How do you access the Update Service?

You can subscribe to the Update Service online at www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service.

## Important

Ask the person who submits your application for the application reference so you can subscribe to the Update Service when you apply for your DBS check.

If you wait to subscribe with your DBS Certificate number you must use it within 14 days of the resulting DBS Certificate issue date.

### Subscribing online is quick and simple

- Enter your:
  - Name
  - Gender
  - Date of birth
  - Email address
  - Application reference or DBS Certificate number

### Remember

- If you wait to subscribe with your DBS Certificate number you must use it within 14 days of the DBS Certificate issue date.

### Payment

- A card payment for the subscription fee, if applicable, is made securely from your account.

### Confirmation

- When your subscription is confirmed make a note of your unique ID and keep it secure.
- You then start to see the benefits of this new service.

## Benefits to you

- Saves you time and money.
- One DBS Certificate is all you may ever need.
- Take your DBS Certificate from role to role within the same workforce.
- You are in control of your DBS Certificate.
- Get ahead of the rest and apply for jobs DBS pre-checked.

## Benefits to your employer or organisation

- Instant online checks of DBS Certificates.
- No more DBS application forms to fill in.
- They may never need to apply for another DBS check for an employee again.
- Less bureaucracy.
- Saves time and money.
- Enhances safeguarding processes and may help to reduce risks.
- Easy to incorporate into existing suitability decision-making processes.

## What else you need to know

To coincide with the launch of the Update Service the DBS will no longer automatically issue a copy of your DBS Certificate to the Registered Body who countersigned your DBS application form. Employers and recruiting organisations will need to ask you for sight of your DBS Certificate. This is to give you greater control over your information.

## Further information

Detailed information included in this guide:

- quick guides
- frequently asked questions
- terms, conditions and exceptions

You can also find further information at www.gov.uk/dbs

Watch our Update Service YouTube video for applicants here

# 2. Quick guides

## How to subscribe to the Update Service

### Step 1

- You can subscribe to the Update Service if your DBS application form was received by the DBS on or after 17 June 2013, using the application reference number or the reference number on the resulting DBS Certificate within 14 days of its issue.
- Go to www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service to subscribe to the Update Service.

### Step 2

- Please read the instructions carefully and enter all the required information.
- Enter your date of birth in DD/MM/YYYY format.
- Select whether you are applying with your DBS application reference or with your DBS Certificate number.
- Check you have entered the exact application reference or DBS Certificate number.
- Ensure you do not enter any spaces after you type your information.

### Step 3

- Your personal details must match those on your application form or DBS Certificate.
- Agree to the Terms and Conditions of the service.

### Step 4

- Answer the question 'Does the above application/DBS Certificate relate to a voluntary position?'

### Step 5

- Make payment for subscription fee (if relevant). A payment confirmation screen will confirm whether payment was successful.
- If the application form/DBS Certificate was issued for a voluntary position the subscription is free-of-charge.

You have now subscribed to the Update Service: please make a note of your unique ID number and keep it safe. You should not share this ID number with anyone else because you will use it to access your Update Service account online.

If you have subscribed with your DBS application form reference number your subscription will start from the date of issue printed on your DBS Certificate. If for some reason your application form is withdrawn your subscription fee will be refunded and your subscription cancelled.

## Managing your subscription

If you have subscribed to the Update Service you can:

- View the reference details of any applications and/or DBS Certificates linked to your subscription.
- View the Update status of any DBS Certificate linked to your subscription.
- Amend your contact details.
- Add and remove applications and DBS Certificates.
    - All applications and DBS Certificates attached to your subscription must be in the same name.
- View the details of any organisations that have made a Status Check of your DBS Certificates.
- Cancel your subscription.
- Renew your subscription (this facility is only available 30 days prior to your subscription expiring).
- View the status and expiration date of your subscription.

## Statuses explained

| **Subscription status** | |
|---|---|
| New | when you apply with an application form reference number |
| Subscribed | when your DBS Certificate is attached to your subscription |
| Cancelled | if you cancel your subscription |
| Expired | if you fail to renew your subscription |
| **Application status** if you subscribe with a DBS check application form | |
| Received | when we receive your DBS check application form at the DBS |
| Not received | whilst we are waiting for your DBS check application form to be received |
| Printed | when your DBS Certificate has been printed |
| **Update status** which shows the current status of a DBS Certificate in your account | |
| Non-blank/No New Info | still current |
| Blank/No New Info | still current |
| New Info | no longer current |

# 3. Frequently Asked Questions

1. **How do I access the Update Service?**

   You can apply online to subscribe to the Update Service at www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service. You will receive a unique ID number, which you must keep safe and not share with anyone, as you will use this to access your Update Service account online.

2. **When can I subscribe?**

   You can subscribe to the Update Service at the same time as you apply for your next DBS check using your application form reference number. Your form must be received by the DBS within 28 days of you subscribing. When your DBS Certificate is issued the DBS will automatically add it to your account.

3. **I already have an application in progress; can I subscribe to the Update Service using the application reference?**

   You can if your DBS application form was received by the DBS on or after 17 June 2013. If you have applied before this date you can't use that application form, or the resulting Certificate to subscribe to the Update Service.

4. **I didn't subscribe with my application reference can I subscribe with my DBS Certificate number?**

   If you did not subscribe with your application reference number and wish to use your DBS Certificate number you must use it within 14 days of the resulting DBS Certificate issue date.

5. **I already have a DBS Certificate can I subscribe to the Update Service?**

   You can only subscribe to the Update Service using your DBS Certificate number if you applied for your DBS check on or after 17 June. If you use your Certificate number to subscribe to the Update Service you must subscribe within 14 days of the date that the Certificate was issued.

6. **Who can subscribe?**

   Only applicants who apply for a DBS check can subscribe to the Update Service.

   Organisations do not subscribe to the service, as they can access the service online for free to carry out a Status Check on an individual's DBS Certificate.

7. **Do I have to subscribe to the Update Service?**

   No you don't, this is an optional service provided by the DBS.

   Some organisations may however decide to make subscribing to the Update Service a condition of your employment, but this will be a matter between you and your employer or recruiting organisation, not the DBS.

8. **Can I join the Update Service with a manual DBS Certificate?**

   No. Unfortunately, as your DBS Certificate was not produced by the system you cannot link this to the Update Service. If you have received a manual DBS Certificate you will have also received a letter explaining that it is a manual DBS Certificate and not a system generated one.

**9. When will my subscription start?**

Your subscription will start when you add a DBS Certificate to your Update Service account or from the date of issue of your DBS Certificate if you subscribed with your DBS application form.

**10. How do I add a DBS Certificate to my subscription?**

If you applied to subscribe to the Update Service with your application form, the DBS will automatically add the resulting DBS Certificate to your subscription. If you would like to add further DBS Certificates you can do this by using the Certificate number printed on your Certificate within 14 days of its issue. You can only add certificates relating to applications received by the DBS on or after 17 June 2013.

**11. When can I allow an organisation to check my DBS Certificate?**

When you add a DBS Certificate to your account it will show that you are 'subscribed'. You can then give your consent to allow an organisation to carry out a Status Check or your continued consent to carry out checks for the duration of your employment.

**12. How can I let an organisation carry out a Status Check on my DBS Certificate?**

You will need to give your consent and then show them your original DBS Certificate. They will record the DBS Certificate's 12 digit reference number and your name and date of birth. After this they will go online and carry out a Status Check.

**13. Is the service only available online?**

Yes. The service is only available online; however, we may look to see how we can offer other ways of providing this service in the future.

**14. Is there a cost to subscribe?**

Yes. To subscribe to the Update Service you must pay a small subscription fee of just £13 per year, unless you are subscribing with a DBS Certificate for a voluntary position.

**15. How long is the subscription period?**

The subscription is for 12 months so you will need to pay the fee (if applicable) every year to stay subscribed.

**16. How do I pay the subscription fee?**

You will only be able to pay the subscription fee by credit or debit card, from within your online Update Service account.

**17. Who can pay the subscription fee?**

You or someone else can pay the fee but if you are using someone else's card you must have their permission to do so.

**18. If my employer reimburses my subscription fee, will this be subject to income tax?**

No it won't because HMRC have made this exempt from income tax.

**19. Do volunteers have to pay to subscribe?**

No. If you have applied for a DBS check as a volunteer (defined by the DBS) you can subscribe to the service free-of-charge.

**20. How do I pay for my subscription if I move from a volunteer position to a paid position?**

You will need to apply for a new DBS check, create a new Update Service account and pay the subscription fee by credit or debit card.

**21. Can I add a DBS Certificate, for a paid position, to my Update Service account which I opened with a DBS Certificate for a voluntary position?**

No, you cannot add a DBS Certificate for a paid position to a free subscription which was created with a DBS Certificate obtained for a voluntary position; you would need to create a new subscription for the paid-for DBS Certificate.

**22. Can I add a DBS Certificate for a voluntary position to my Update Service account which I opened with a DBS Certificate for a paid position?**

Yes, each time you apply for a new DBS check, you can add the DBS Certificate to your paid-for subscription; this includes DBS Certificates for voluntary positions.

**23. Can I cancel my subscription at any time?**

Yes. If you cancel your subscription the DBS will close your account and your DBS Certificate(s) attached to this account will no longer be checked for updates.

**24. If I subscribe to the Update Service, but change my mind and wish to cancel my subscription, will I get a refund?**

No, you will not get a refund unless your account was cancelled because you subscribed with our DBS application form and the DBS did not receive this form within 28 days.

**25. How many DBS Certificates can I add to my Update Service account?**

You can add as many DBS Certificates as you need i.e. if you have attached a Standard Certificate to your account and then have to apply for an Enhanced Certificate you can add this one to the same account without incurring an additional subscription fee.

**26. I have lost my DBS Certificate, what should I do?**

You will need to remove your certificate from your Update Service account, apply for a new DBS Certificate and add that to your Update Service account. The DBS will not issue replacement DBS Certificates if you have lost it.

**27. Why would I need more than one DBS Certificate?**

Your employer or organisation may ask you to apply for another DBS check, if:

- They have taken the decision not to use the Update Service for Status Checks
- Your DBS Certificate has been updated, is no longer current and has been removed from the Update Service.
- They may need another level or type of DBS Certificate than the one you have. E.g. you may have an Enhanced with an Adults' Barred List check not an Enhanced with a Children's Barred List check.
- The Enhanced DBS Certificate relates to another workforce.

- If you are working with children or as a shared lives carer with adults and you do this work in your own home your employer may need your DBS check to reveal information about you and your address.

**28. What does the subscription status mean in my account?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| New | = | you have subscribed with a DBS application form and the DBS Certificate has yet to be issued and added to your subscription. |
| Subscribed | = | a DBS Certificate has been added to your subscription and is now being kept up-to-date. |

**29. I can't access my account, why is this?**

This could be because:

- you have logged in with the wrong details;
- your subscription has lapsed as you didn't renew it - you will have to apply for a new DBS check and then re-subscribe to the Update Service;
- you subscribed using your DBS application form but your application was not received by the DBS within the required 28 day period, so your subscription has been stopped and you will receive a refund; you can re-subscribe using your DBS Certificate when you receive;
- your form may have been received in the time period but there may have been an issue with the information provided so the application could not be linked to your subscription within the 28 days required.

**30. What does the Application status mean in my account?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Not received | = we are waiting to receive your DBS application form. |
| Received | = we have received your DBS application form. |
| Printed | = your DBS Certificate has been printed. |

**31. What does the Update status mean in my account?**

'Update status' is the status of a DBS Certificate in your Update Service account:

- Blank/No New Info = The DBS Certificate when issued was blank i.e. it did not reveal any information about you, no new information has been found since its issue and can therefore be accepted as being still current and valid.
- Non-Blank/No New Info = The DBS Certificate revealed information about you, no new information has been found since its issue and can therefore be accepted as being still current and valid.
- New Info = New information has come to light since the DBS Certificate was issued and you will need to apply for a new DBS check to see this new information.

**32. Can I remove a DBS Certificate from my Update Service account?**

If you have DBS Certificate attached to your account you can remove it at any time. However, once removed you cannot add it again or use the same one to create another subscription.

**33. Will I have to apply for a new DBS Certificate if I am subscribed to the Update Service and I change my name?**

Yes, if you change your name you will need to replace existing linked certificates. To do this, you need apply for a new criminal records check for each linked certificate. Once your new applications are subscribed to your Update Service account you can de-link your old certificates.

**34. Can I change my email, mobile phone number, correspondence address, payment details?**

Yes. You will need to log in to your Update Service account to do this. You can only amend your payment details within 30 days of the renewal date of your subscription and if you have selected to automatically renew your subscription.

**35. If I am subscribed to the Update Service and I change my address will my DBS Certificate still be valid?**

Yes, the current address is just one piece of information used when searching the Police National Computer for an applicant's convictions. If you are convicted of an offence when subscribed our system will link the offence to you and cause the status of your DBS Certificate to change.

You can amend your correspondence details in your account. This does not update your DBS certificate which would still be in your old address.

**36. Can I use an overseas address on my application form?**

Yes you can, if you are applying while you are overseas, you have the option of putting a care of address in the current address field. This could be a family, friend, employer or Registered Body address that you choose. You can then collect your certificate when you come to the UK for work or volunteering role or arrange to have it forwarded.

If you would rather have your certificate sent to your overseas address, please be advised it may take a little longer than our published processing times for you to receive it as this will be dispatched from DBS rather than our central posting office.

**37. How do I find out my application reference number?**

You can either contact the person who asked you to complete your DBS application form or contact the DBS on 0870 90 90 811. We can only provide your application reference if we have received your application form.

**38. How do I find out my DBS Certificate reference number?**

The 12 digit DBS Certificate number can be found on the top right-hand side of your DBS Certificate.

**39. What if I forget my Update Service ID reference?**

You should call the DBS on 0870 90 90 811.

**40. What if I lose my DBS Certificate?**

You must keep your DBS Certificate safe and secure as the DBS will not issue replacement DBS Certificates.

**41. I want to subscribe to the Update Service but have not received my DBS Certificate?**

If you did not subscribe with your application reference number and wish to use your DBS Certificate number you must use it within 14 days of the resulting DBS Certificate issue date.

If you have not received your DBS Certificate and the Online Tracking Service confirms it was issued more than 7 days ago you can call the DBS on 0870 90 90 811. Customer Services will give you the Certificate number so you can use it to subscribe to the Update Service and attach that Certificate to your account.

**42. I have already subscribed to the Update Service but have not received my DBS Certificate?**

If you have not received your DBS Certificate and it was issued more than 14 days ago you can request a reprint. You can use the Online Tracking Service at www.gov.uk/dbs to find out if your DBS Certificate has been issued and the date of issue.

**43. Can I stop an organisation checking the status of my DBS Certificate?**

Yes. You should contact them and withdraw your consent for any future checks. If they fail to stop they would be breaking the law by accessing data they were not entitled to see. If they persist you could remove the DBS Certificate from your account but this would also mean other organisations would not be able to carry out a Status Check on it. If they persist, you should contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

**44. How can I find out who has carried out a Status Check of my DBS Certificate?**

You can see a full list of the organisations that have carried out a Status Check and how many checks they have done from your online account

**45. What information will the organisation see when they carry out a Status Check?**

The organisation will receive one of the following results:

- This DBS Certificate did not reveal any information and remains current as no further information has been identified since its issue.
- This DBS Certificate remains current as no further information has been identified since its issue.
- This DBS Certificate is no longer current. Please apply for a new DBS check to get the most up-to-date information.
- The details entered do not match those held on our system. Please check and try again.

**46. When I am subscribed to the Update Service and the DBS apply the new filtering rule to remove old and minor convictions, will this change the status of my Certificate?**

This would not cause a status change through the Update Service. A status change is only prompted when there is new information to be added, or an offence needs to be changed or amended, or because you have become barred, whereas an offence being filtered out would mean a removal of information from your Certificate.

If you wish to have a new DBS Certificate which does not show the offence that has been filtered out, you will need to apply for a new DBS check.

**47. Will I be told if the information on my DBS Certificate changes?**

No. If you are subscribed to the Update Service and want to check that your DBS Certificate is still current and that no further information has been identified since it was issued, you can log in to your account and check its status.

**48. What is likely to cause a change to my DBS Certificate?**

Your DBS Certificate status will change if:

- For all DBS certificates
    - new convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings; or
    - any amendment or change to a current conviction, caution, warning or reprimand.
- For Enhanced DBS Certificates
    - any new, relevant police information.
- For Enhanced Certificates with a Barred List check(s):
    - if you become barred for that list(s) checked on the Enhanced Certificate.

**49. What can I do if my DBS Certificate status changes but I don't think it should have?**

You should call the DBS on 0870 90 90 811, select option 3 and we will investigate to find out why this has happened and let you know.

**50. My employer has asked that I get another DBS check because they have found out that new information has come to light. Do I have to get one?**

This is a matter between you and your employer. If you do not apply for another DBS check your employer may withdraw their offer of employment, terminate your employment or move you to another job which does not require a DBS check.

**51. My new DBS Certificate contains new information. Do I have to show this to my employer?**

This is matter between you and your employer. If you do not show your new DBS Certificate to your employer they may withdraw their offer of employment, terminate your employment or move you to another job which does not require a DBS check. Also, if you don't show them your new updated DBS Certificate within 28 days of receiving it, the Registered Body that countersigned this application may be entitled to request a copy from the DBS.

**52. An organisation has said that they need me to apply for another DBS check but I thought I would never need to apply for one again if I subscribed the Update Service?**

In some cases your employer or organisation will require a new DBS check, for example:

- The organisation may decide not to use the Update Service for Status Checks.
- Your DBS Certificate has been updated and as it is no longer current it has been removed from the Update Service.
- Your DBS Certificate may not be of the same level or type as is required by the organisation. For example, you may have an Enhanced with an Adults' Barred List check not an Enhanced with a Children's Barred List check.
- Your DBS Certificate was not issued for the right workforce.

**53. Can I re-use my certificate for a new home based position?**

The DBS will not have carried out checks on the address from where the work will be undertaken. You will need to discuss this with your employer or the person requesting the certificate. For example, if you are a childminder looking after children in your own home.

**54. My Update Service status has changed; my employer wishes to submit an Early Confirmation check to see if this is because I have been barred from working in Regulated Activity. Do I have to give my permission for them to do this?**

Your employer will need your consent prior to submitting an Early Confirmation check. They can only request this information if all of the following conditions apply:

- You are subscribed to the Update Service; and
- A Status Check has indicated that the certificate is no longer up-to-date; and
- The certificate included a check of a Barred List(s); and
- The employer has your to consent.

**55. My employer has informed me that they have requested an Early Confirmation check, what does this mean?**

As a subscriber to the Update Service, with your permission, your employer is entitled to carry out Status Checks to see if the information on your DBS Certificate has changed. They have been informed that there has been a change, and have requested an Early Confirmation check to see if the change came as a result of you being placed on either of the DBS Barred Lists.

**56. My employer has informed me that they have requested an Early Confirmation check and they have been informed that my name appears in a Barred List. What does this mean?**

A Status Check undertaken by your employer has revealed a change to the information on your DBS Certificate. They have sought further information through an Early Confirmation check, which has revealed that you have been placed on one or both of the DBS Barred Lists, stopping you from working in Regulated Activity with either children and/or adults.

**57. My employer has requested an Early Confirmation check and has been told that I have been barred but I don't know anything about this. What should I do?**

You need to contact the DBS Helpdesk on 01325 953 795 or email dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

**58. My status has changed because I was convicted of an offence or was barred but this has now been removed following representations or appeal. Will I need to get a new DBS check?**

Yes, the status change is correct because new information existed at the time the status was updated and this information would have appeared on a new certificate if you had applied for a DBS check at that time. You will need to apply for a new DBS check because your current certificate is no longer valid.

**59. Is the Update Service secure?**

Yes it is secure. It is hosted on our secure and accredited DBS system.

**60. Is the Update Service available in Welsh?**

The online service is available in Welsh.

**61. I am a transgender applicant; will my previous gender and identity continue to be protected when subscribing the Update Service?**

Yes. Your previous gender and identity will be protected unless you have given permission for your DBS certificate to contain this information. If you would like further advice you can email the Sensitive Application Team at sensitive@dbs.gsi.gov.uk or call on 0151 676 1452.

# 4. Terms, conditions and exceptions

**Subscription**

- An individual's subscription will continue even if DBS Certificates are removed from the account. If the subscription is not renewed at the end of the subscription period the account will close. Any DBS Certificate attached to a closed account will be removed and organisations will no longer be able to carry out Status Checks. If a subscription lapses you will have to apply for a new DBS check and then re-subscribe to the Update Service.

**Home-based Occupations**

- The Update Service will only check for updates based on the individual for whom the check was carried out – not the home address where the work is being undertaken or any other individuals employed or living at that address.

**Multiple DBS Certificates**

- Individuals may still require more than one DBS Certificate if their DBS Certificate is not of the same type and level of check required by an employer. Employers may require a different level or type of check to the one you have e.g.
    - **Level**: Enhanced not Standard check.
    - **Type**: Enhanced with a Children's Barred List check not an Adults' Barred List check; or
      Enhanced without a Barred List check.
    - **Workforce**: Child Workforce not Adults Workforce.

**Manual DBS Certificates**

- Sometimes it is not possible for the DBS to produce a system generated DBS Certificate. When this happens the DBS will issue a manual DBS Certificate. Manual DBS Certificates cannot be used in the Update Service.

**Update Frequency**

When a person adds their DBS Certificate to their Update Service account the DBS will keep their DBS Certificate up-to-date by *regularly searching to see if any new information has come to light since its issue.

* Regularly means:

- Criminal record conviction and barring information will be searched for updates on a weekly basis as this information can change frequently.
- Non-conviction information which is released on relatively few DBS Certificates and changes infrequently will be searched for updates every 9 months.

The frequency condition is based on the number of DBS Certificates which reveal this type of information; the likely risk of new information coming to light in the time period; and the cost of checking for changes.

**Cancelling DBS Certificates**

If the names declared on a DBS Certificate attached to a subscription change, or are found to be incorrect, the DBS reserves the right to cancel the incorrect DBS Certificates attached to that subscription.

**Retention of payment information**

Details of the card used to pay the subscription fee will be retained for the purposes of automatic renewal and refunds where appropriate. The DBS will be using a secure Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard system.