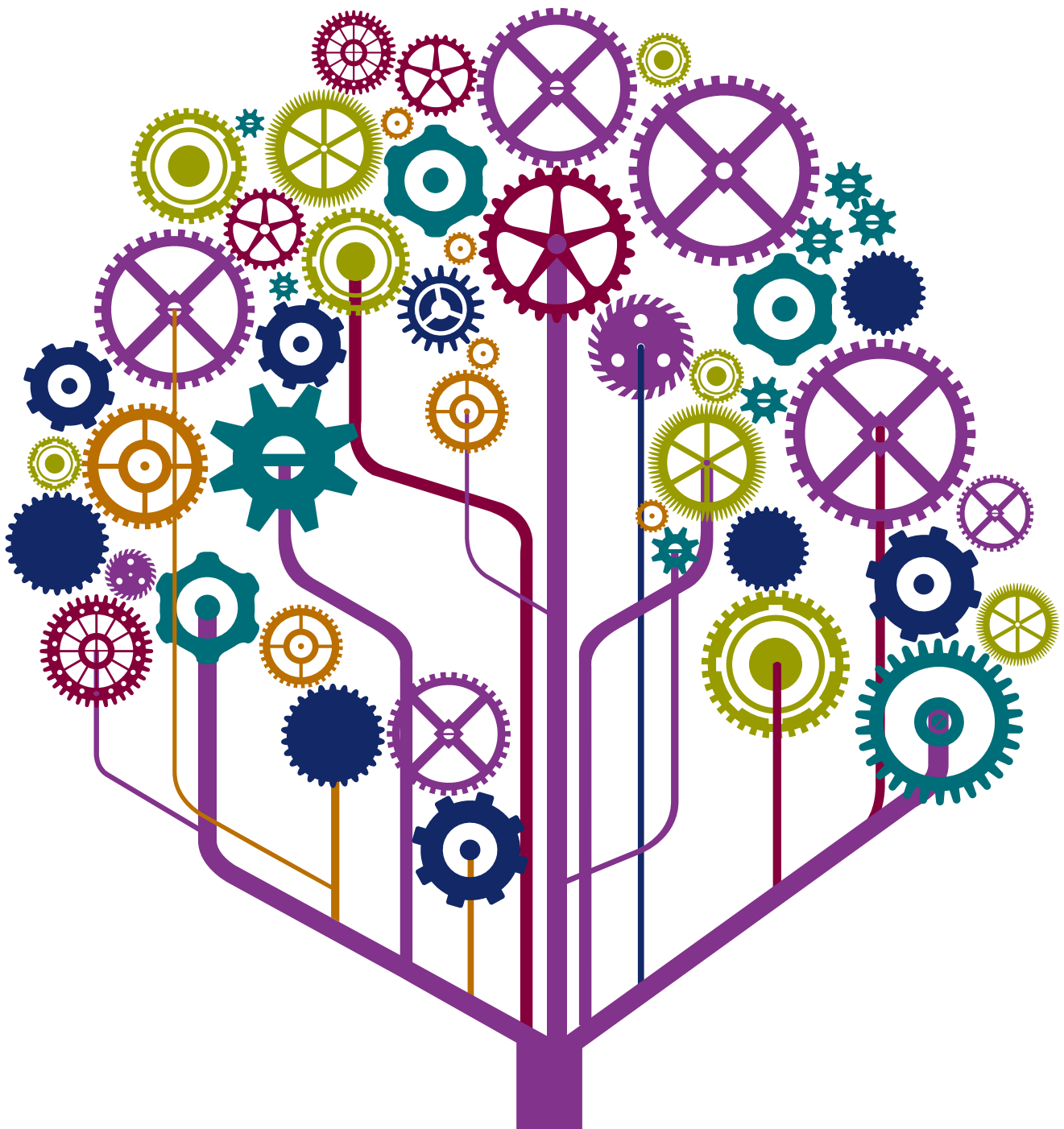




Disclosure &  
Barring Service

## Our Strategic Plan 2017-20

Simpler, faster and more accessible





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## Chair and Chief Executive's Foreword

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is first and foremost an organisation responsible for delivering government policy on disclosure and barring functions. We recognise the expectations of Home Office (HO) ministers and the wider government agenda in relation to safeguarding and in carrying out our responsibilities we are committed to providing faster, modernised services in order to help government achieve its objectives.

In our initial year, our priority was to maintain customer focus whilst dealing with the significant changes involved in establishing DBS. Since then we have been developing our capacity and capability for change, building strong foundations providing the ideal platform from which to build and transform our services.

Delivering and embedding our modernised IT solution to reflect modern ways of working and living is a significant challenge. This will enable us to deliver our services more quickly and efficiently and provide digital channels for our services. It will improve the effectiveness of services we already offer and provide the capability for us to deliver new services should the government require us to.

We will continue to develop our key relationships with customers and stakeholders, keeping safeguarding at the heart of everything we do. By taking time to understand our key customer groups and maintaining regular engagement with key stakeholders we will adapt and improve our services to them. We will look to use the information we have to support the wider safeguarding agenda and we will use our data, knowledge and insight to improve the quality of referrals and to ensure those who have a duty to refer do so.

We will further develop the DBS, introducing modernised ways of working, building capability, resilience and succession planning into our organisational structure, adopting an agile approach to meet and overcome challenges and take advantage of opportunities with focus and energy. We continue to develop and modernise our core products, improving productivity and working closely with key partners to meet customer needs.

We recognise the importance of our constructive working relationships with HO ministers and officials and value their support in helping us deliver our services.

This plan sets out our strategic ambitions over the next three years and will be supported by yearly operational Business Plans. Our Board and staff fully support this plan and we look forward to developing our capabilities, widening our activities and achieving our potential.



*Bill Griffiths*

Bill Griffiths  
Chair



*Adele Downey*

Adele Downey  
Chief Executive

## An overview of our plans

This strategic plan sets out our vision and objectives for the next three years and follows on from our 2014-17 Strategic Plan, which was published in 2014. We have written this plan to inform our customers and stakeholders about our ambitions for the future and how we will engage with them. It also provides our staff with a clear set of objectives that they can relate to and see how their work contributes to the wider picture.

DBS was established in December 2012 following a merger of two organisations and since then we have built the foundations for DBS. These foundations will enable us to deliver a real step change in our services over the coming years.

We have:

- created a coherent single organisation focused on delivery of safeguarding supported by a clear set of characteristics
- launched the Update Service
- implemented filtering of old and minor criminal records
- commissioned an independent review of our barring operations and implemented all the recommendations
- achieved and retained Customer Service Excellence leading to an 89% customer satisfaction rate

Some of the key changes we want to deliver are:

- digital channels across our range of products and services
- providing a faster service for our customers
- developing our key relationships across our different customer groups and stakeholders
- using our data and knowledge to identify trends
- informing government policy through our data and experience

We have worked with our Board and Home Office to develop this plan taking into account the environment within which we work.

We have considered our vision and objectives for the next three years and these reflect what we are seeking to achieve in the future.

## About DBS

### Who we are

We are responsible for the delivery of disclosure and barring functions on behalf of government. We are a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State for the Home Office. DBS was established under the Protection of Freedoms Act (PoFA) 2012 on 1 December 2012, operating from two sites, Liverpool and Darlington. We operate disclosure functions for England, Wales, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man, and barring functions for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### How we work

We are led by a Board which is responsible for the strategic leadership of the organisation and has collective responsibility for the proper conduct of DBS affairs. This role can be summarised as: direction, monitoring and control, assurance and propriety. The Board comprises Chair, executive and non-executive members.

The functions of DBS are those contained within the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (SVGA), Part V of the Police Act 1997, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (SVG) and PoFA. These functions are broadly described as 'disclosure' and 'barring' functions and are set out below.

We hold and maintain a register of organisations approved by DBS to submit applications for criminal records certificates.

We issue three levels of certificates of criminal records:

**Basic certificate.** In 2017 we will launch a Basic certificate. This is available for any position or purpose and will contain details of convictions and conditional cautions that are considered to be unspent under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended) (ROA).

**Standard certificate.** This is available to those working in roles as specified in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Standard certificates show unspent and spent convictions, cautions,

reprimands and warnings (statutory disposals given by a police officer to a young person who admits guilt) held on the Police National Computer (PNC), and subject to filtering.

**Enhanced certificate.** This is the highest level of check available to anyone involved in work with vulnerable groups, and other positions involving a high degree of trust, for example, certain office holders (who are listed in the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002). Enhanced certificates contain the same information as the Standard certificate, with the addition of relevant police information held by a police force. Additionally where the role is prescribed in legislation it will include details of whether the individual is included in the lists of those barred from working with children and vulnerable groups.

We reach considered decisions about whether an individual should be barred from engaging in regulated activity<sup>1</sup> with children and/or adults and maintaining the childrens' and adults' barred lists.

We bar any individual who has accepted a caution for or been convicted of an automatic barring offence.

We consider for barring any individual who has accepted a caution for or been convicted of an automatic inclusion offence (i.e. an offence that does allow representations) or has been referred to DBS from, for example, an employer or regulatory body, subject to any representations submitted by the individual – provided DBS also has reason to believe that the person is or has been, or might in the future be, engaged in regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults.

We make decisions as to whether it is appropriate to remove a person from a barred list.

We operate a system of updating Standard and Enhanced certificates, through the Update Service which we will extend to our Basic certificate.

<sup>1</sup> Regulated activity is defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which outlines the activities, establishments and positions that make up regulated activity.



## Operating landscape

DBS was established in 2012 and this plan is our second full strategic plan. Delivery of our Strategic Plan 2014-17 has provided a firm foundation on which we intend to build our future plans.

We operate in the complex world of safeguarding. Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Both central and local government have key roles to play in this work.

We play a vital role in safeguarding the most vulnerable in our society through the provision of criminal record information enabling employers and voluntary organisations to make safer recruitment decisions and ultimately by barring those individuals considered to pose a significant risk in specific workforces.

As an NDPB of the Home Office we operate at arm's length from ministers, meaning that we are independent, but operate within a framework of ministerial accountability and control. Our sponsoring minister retains overall

accountability to Parliament for the performance and delivery of DBS.

We will continue to work with the Home Office, the Department for Education and the Department of Health to ensure we deliver the intention behind the policy and to highlight any trends in behaviour or offending that we identify.

We are already working closely with the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. We will consider any emerging themes identified by the Inquiry and how we can enhance our systems and processes to reduce any gaps identified.

We know from our disclosure customer insight that delays in our service have the most impact on individuals seeking work. A speedy and consistent service is what they require and expect from us. We also recognise that we need to provide better access to our services through modern technologies.



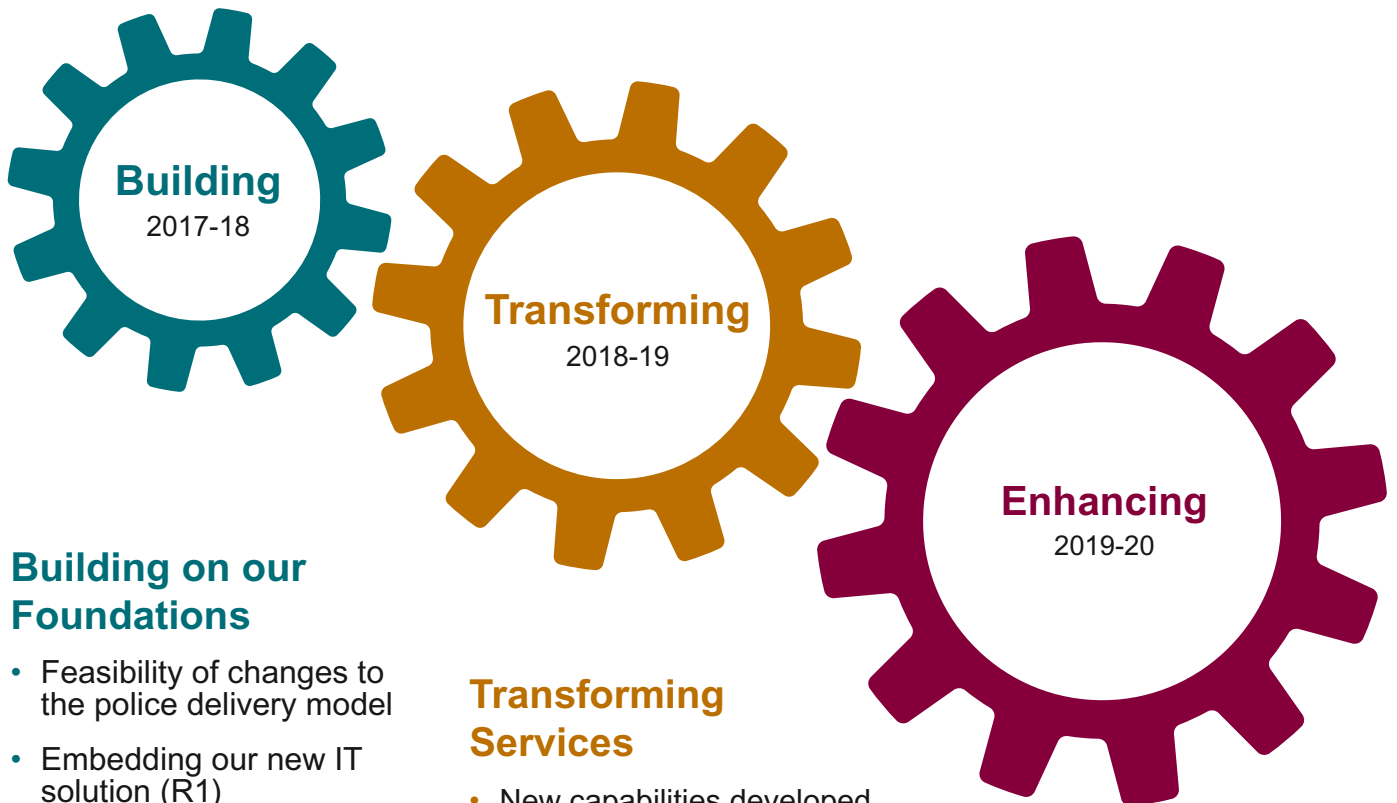
**Our vision is to  
make our services  
simpler, faster and  
more accessible.**

**Our mission is to  
put safeguarding  
at the heart of  
everything we do.**

Our focus in the next three years is to build on the foundations of the early years of DBS by developing our capacity and capability for change. We will transform our services to our customers by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the end to end service, providing digital channels and delivering any new services that government requires. This will include investigating the feasibility of changing how police decision making in relation to our work is carried out.



## The future at a glance



### Building on our Foundations

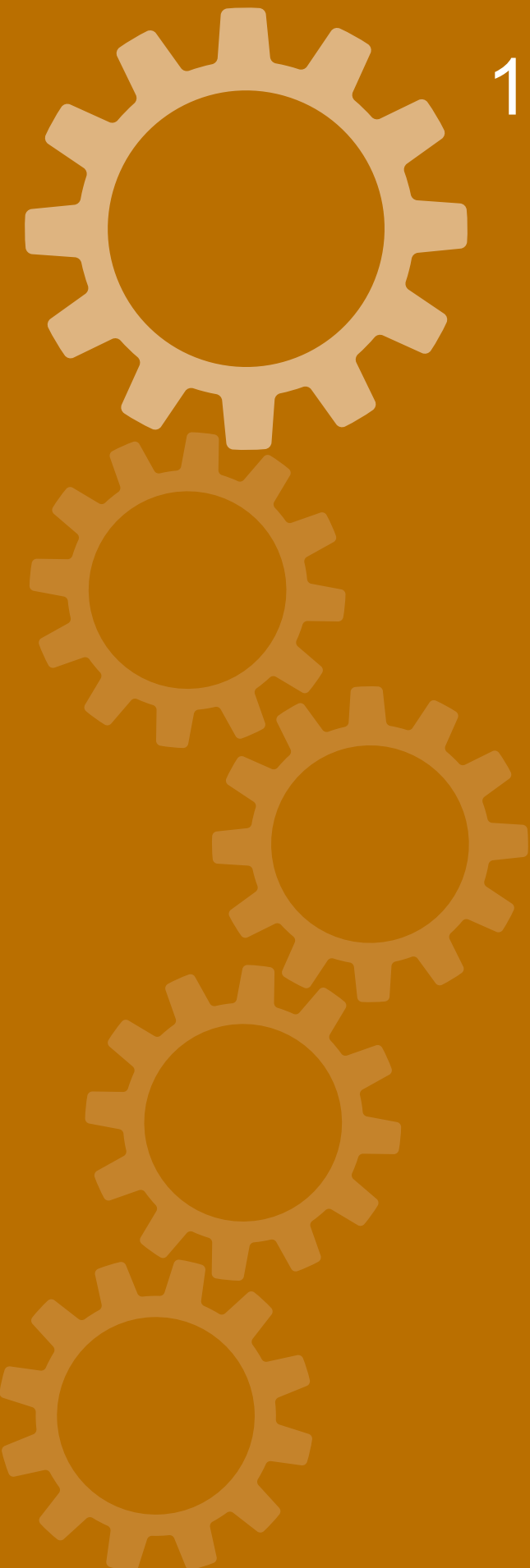
- Feasibility of changes to the police delivery model
- Embedding our new IT solution (R1)
- Launch Basic certificates
- Implement target operating model with focus on senior team resilience
- Determine commercial strategy and in-source/out-source approach to our existing processes
- Enhance data and knowledge management capabilities - undertake research
- Roll out campaign to improve quality of barring referrals
- Introduce smarter working

### Transforming Services

- New capabilities developed - depth of current capabilities increased
- If feasible, make tactical changes to the police delivery model
- Implement product and service strategy
- Digital services rolled out

### Enhancing Safeguarding

- All services can be accessed digitally
- Police model transformation commences
- Capability in place to extend products and services if required
- Review of end to end delivery model complete
- Modern ways of working in place - mobile, flexible, personal choice



# 1. Improve safeguarding through delivery of excellent services and sharing of knowledge

We play a vital role in safeguarding the most vulnerable in our society through the work that we do. We gather data and intelligence across all our work areas and we know we can improve how we assess and use this data to improve safeguarding.



## Our plans:

We will

- provide help and support to those who need to refer individuals to us for barring consideration. We will focus on ensuring we receive referrals containing all relevant information enabling us to make relevant decisions more quickly. We will promote the role of DBS to all involved in regulated activity.
- improve our capability to question, analyse and interpret our data to identify trends in customer behaviour, offending and potential gaps in policy.
- develop the tools and capabilities required to move to a position where we are able to inform government policy through an evidence based approach.
- commission a further independent review of our operations to ensure the effectiveness of our end to end delivery model.
- support Registered Bodies and Regulatory Bodies by publishing clear guidance.

## What will success look like by 2020:

We will have

- reduced time spent on requesting additional case information enabling us to make quicker decisions.
- increased the range of organisations that make referrals to us.
- demonstrated that our data and knowledge has informed government policy development.
- demonstrated improved compliance of Registered Bodies with the Code of Practice.



## 2. Drives **good value** for money

We are funded by the fees income from our disclosure customers. We aim to operate on a full cost recovery basis in line with HM Treasury's "Managing Public Money".



## Our plans:

We will

- review the efficiency of our processes and systems and make changes to improve these.
- review the performance of our back office functions.
- review our products and propose changes to improve their effectiveness.
- develop a commercial strategy to set out how we will maximise the value for money from our suppliers.

## What will success look like by 2020:

We will have

- improved productivity of our processes.
- proactively identified opportunities to be more efficient.
- recovered our costs through our fees.
- ensured our suppliers meet the desired performance levels.



### 3. Meets customer needs and **exceeds expectations**

Our customers tell us their number one priority is a speedy service that they can rely upon. They also want to be able to interact digitally with us across our range of services.

Police information is a vital component of all of our business processes. The delivery of our functions in a timely manner is impacted by the performance of each of the 52 police disclosure units.



## Our plans:

We will

- work with our customers to clearly understand their needs, enabling us to define the enhancements needed which will drive some of our future change programme.
- work closely with the National Police Chiefs Council and Home Office to assess the feasibility of a new model for the provision of police information.
- work with the Home Office National Law Enforcement Data Services programme to improve our access to police information.
- develop a digital service offering across our products and services.
- implement our modernised IT solution which will provide our digital platform.
- successfully transition England and Wales Basic certificate applications from Disclosure Scotland.
- review our processes and workflow across our supply chain.

## What will success look like by 2020:

We will have

- maintained our customer satisfaction score.
- made all our services and products available digitally and where possible we will not use paper applications.
- the ability to issue disclosure certificates where there is no information to disclose, within 24 hours of receipt.
- improved efficiency through our modernised IT solution and business processes, enhancing our digital services and reducing costs.
- increased our online referrals capability.



## 4. Develops a **talented workforce** to **inspire** continuous improvement

Our people are vital to our organisation, without their talent and commitment we will not achieve our objectives. We will equip our staff with the right skills and knowledge to deliver excellent results.





## Our plans:


We will

- implement a new organisational structure known as the target operating model. This will provide for additional capacity at senior levels to ensure we maintain focus and energy on delivering our objectives.
- focus on developing leadership resilience and succession planning to enable effective change management.
- continue to identify new capabilities that we require to support the development of our business such as data analytics and digital skills.
- introduce flexible working practices which will focus our work on outcomes rather than processes and we will invest in tools to enable our staff, should they choose, to work from a range of locations.

## What will success look like by 2020:

We will have

- a more skilled and flexible workforce.
- created capacity to deliver the strategy.
- transformed our working practices to optimise the tools and working environments for staff.
- improved our employee engagement score.
- enhanced our capabilities to facilitate succession planning.
- developed an apprenticeship programme to help us develop key skills for the future.



## 5. Is a **highly valued** public organisation

We are a public organisation whose work affects a significant number of people and organisations. We will work with stakeholders to understand their needs and how we can adapt and improve our service to them.



## Our plans:

We will

- regularly engage with key customer groups<sup>2</sup> to assess their views of the service that we provide and to understand their needs in terms of designing changes to our service.
- implement a tiered approach through our account management model to manage our relationship at a strategic level with policy makers, at a corporate level with regulators and national bodies and at an operational level with customers. This will enable us to capture, analyse and assess the insight that we gather across the full environment enabling us to plan for changes in demand and identify service improvements.
- implement a programme of research on key themes to identify trends in behaviour that we will use to inform policy makers or change our service.
- develop a communications framework to ensure we target key messages to the right audience in the right way.

## What will success look like by 2020:

We will have

- maintained customer satisfaction scores.
- won awards for innovation and customer service.
- been sought out by stakeholders for our opinion.

<sup>2</sup> Citizens, employers, Registered Bodies, Regulated Activity Providers, Keepers of Registers, Supervisory Authorities

## What this means for us

### Our people

We recognise that our people are key to the achievement of our vision and we will continue to invest in our staff to develop core skills for the future. We will focus on ensuring our leaders and managers set a clear direction, are able to inspire their teams and demonstrate positive behaviours.

We will also continue to develop our approach to workforce planning to ensure we have the right skills at the right time to deliver our objectives. We will need to be able to flex quickly to the demands of our customers and ministers.

We will develop and implement our approach to succession planning to ensure that we are able to fill business critical roles and also to grow our own talent.

### Our characteristics

We have five characteristics that underpin the work that we do. These influence the way we deliver our services, how we measure our performance and how we engage with our customers and stakeholders.

We will continue to review our characteristics to ensure they remain relevant.

#### Professional

we're the best at what we do through expert advice, guidance and insight, we have earned the confidence of the public, stakeholders and the government.



#### Accountable

we take ownership for our actions, understanding the seriousness of the work we do and the impact it has on individuals, employers and the economy.



#### Trusted

we do the right thing, even in difficult circumstances, using our experience and available intelligence to inform policy and make objective decisions.



#### Ambitious

we are performance-driven, high achieving and resilient, embracing new challenges and expanding our services to add value to government.



#### Customer-focused

we work effectively with each other, our partners and the government to protect the public – responding to emerging priorities and exceeding expectations.



## **Our financial plans**

We are an NDPB, funded by the fees from our disclosure customers. Our income is dependent upon the volumes of applications for disclosures and Update Service subscriptions received each year. Fees for both certificate levels and the Update Service allow volunteer applications to be processed free of charge. The fee income generated from enhanced disclosures funds our barrister operation.

We intend to concentrate our resources on delivering this plan with particular focus on improved services to meet our customer needs.

Over the period of the plan we will deliver efficiencies that will enable us to review our fees.

## **Our risk tolerance**

Risk tolerance is the amount of uncertainty DBS is prepared to accept in delivering our strategic objectives. We operate in an environment where safeguarding has a much higher public profile and we must ensure we maintain an appropriate balance between safeguarding and proportionality of response.

When making decisions we must ensure we comply with our legal framework. We are open to considering opportunities to change scope or functions or our ways of working but we will balance the costs and benefits with the risk to our core functions.

We have clearly defined risk tolerances across all our business areas which articulate where we are risk averse and where we will be more flexible to the challenges that we face and the opportunities that present themselves.

## **Key risks over the period of this plan include:**

- Our ability to forecast demand for our services and react quickly to changes in demand.
- Our ability to deliver the benefits of our new IT system.
- Adverse legal challenges force a change of direction.
- Our capacity and capability to deliver the plan.
- Effective management and sharing of our data.



# DBS

## Key facts 2016-17

**4.2m**

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Certificates issued each year

**63,000**

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Individuals on a barred list

**1m**

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Subscribers to the Update Service

**£156m**

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Annual operating income

**839**

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Number of staff (full time equivalent)

**89%**

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Customer satisfaction score

## Indicators of success

Our indicators of success provide a high level framework for measuring progress towards the strategic objectives. These indicators are tracked through a number of supporting measures and targets which are captured in our annual Business Plan. The approach forms part of our overall performance management arrangements which operates at a number of levels:

Objective	Indicators of success and current baseline	Target 2017-18	Target range 2018-20 <sup>3</sup>
<b>1</b> Improve safeguarding through delivery of excellent services and sharing of knowledge	Evidence of change resulting from informing	Mechanism developed to demonstrate informing	Demonstrable evidence of informing
	Improve performance of key quality and timeliness measures 2016-17: 1 out of 5 achieved	Achieve all published measures	Achieve all published measures
<b>2</b> Drives good value for money	Decrease the unit cost of our products Notional costs from 2015-16 per paid application Enhanced certificate - £34.64 Standard certificate - £25.44 Update Service - £22.83	Reduction on 2016-17 unit costs	Reduction on 2017-18 unit costs
	Increase productivity in core operations <sup>4</sup> Disclosure certificates issued per person per day 2016/17: 45.5	46-47	50-53
	Barring cases closed per person per month 2016/17: 5.00	5.20	5.20 – 6
<b>3</b> Meets customer needs and exceeds expectations	Increase digital completion rates for user journeys Baseline to be established for each digital product	Baseline to be established for each digital product	+5%
	Increase user satisfaction on information and guidance being clear and easy to find July 2016: 85%	85%	85-89%
<b>4</b> Develops a talented workforce to inspire continuous improvement	Increase employee engagement index March 2017: 64%	66%	68 - 70%
	Reduce staff sickness absence March 2017: 9.34 days	9 days	< 9 days
<b>5</b> Is a highly valued public organisation	Maintain customer satisfaction score July 2016: 89%	89%	89%
	Increase satisfaction with key stakeholder groups Baseline to be established	Baseline to be established	+5%

<sup>3</sup> Specific targets will be included in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 Business Plan.

<sup>4</sup> Based on all staff in Disclosure and Barring Operations as at 31 March 2017.

## Find out more about DBS

Visit our website at: [www.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.gov.uk/dbs)

Contact us

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