



Disclosure &  
Barring Service

# DBS Business Plan 2015-16

**Version 1.3**

**5 August 2015**

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### Chair's Foreword

Our main focus and priority this coming year will be to secure the effective operation of our disclosure and barring functions, ensuring that we are operating to the highest standards. Whilst this Business Plan includes a challenging agenda for improvements, these are ultimately aimed at enhancing our functions and will not disturb effective delivery.

The Plan is premised on our role as a deliverer of government policy, recognising that as policy develops we must be sufficiently flexible to respond. We work closely with the Home Office to support policy development, and aim to provide operational perspective on policy assessment.

Barring is a core and pivotal function of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). By its nature it requires continually and effective review and development. Therefore we will commence work on the implementation of recommendations of the Board commissioned independent review of our barring decision-making process in 2015-16.

We will further strengthen our Board during the year to ensure that all areas of functions are supported by strong non-executive expertise. We will also develop our plans for enhancements to the way that information from local police systems is provided for and through our services and will continue to work with police and Home Office colleagues in the next few years to develop and implement these plans.

I am confident that we are in a good position to improve and develop the service in the coming year, to provide a service that is effective, progressively modernised and responsive.

**Bill Griffiths**

**Chair**

## Chief Executive's Foreword

The effective operation of our functions is, and always will be, the prime objective of everyone within DBS. We consider it a privilege to serve the public and to help safeguard communities.

We met all our performance measures for 2014-15, reflected in our independent customer satisfaction survey results, which noted an overall satisfaction rate of 83%, and 89% agreeing that DBS makes a difference to public safety by helping customers to make effective employment and other decisions.

Our business plan for 2014-15 was ambitious, and in the milestones we delivered, we made significant achievements for our customers and for the organisation. An internal review of the collation, storage and retrieval of barring data resulted in a data management action plan being implemented, which has strengthened information governance within DBS. Our plans for a customer service excellence accreditation in 2015-16 are on track. We have made progress with our customer insight work and achieved positive results from external satisfaction surveys and the launching of a customer service excellence staff engagement programme.

During 2015-16, DBS will embrace further significant change, helping us deliver more electronic services, work more closely with employers, and developing our own infrastructure and staff skills. We do so in an environment where the need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults has never been more high profile.

So as we continue to strive to deliver to extremely high levels of accuracy, quality, and timeliness, we will also be managing a significant transition to a new IT system for ourselves and our stakeholders, towards the end of the year.

Our priorities for this year which are set out in detail within this are to:

- Create a strong performance culture and enhance customer experience
- Modernise our services (Release 1)
- Enhance safeguarding
- Enhance our functions
- Improve our criminal records performance

We have introduced more challenging performance measures and targets that demonstrate our commitment to improvement and transparency.

An effective relationship with our commercial provider, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), will be more important this year than ever, and fundamental to ensuring a smooth transition to a new system and more efficient ways of working.

We look forward to working with the Home Office as DBS sponsor, and consider DBS to be well positioned to support any potential development of safeguarding policy, as it relates to disclosure and barring functions.

We are also keen to continue to work with the PCS union on our forward looking approach to employment relations and support for our workforce.

Lastly, I commend the staff of the DBS, whose professionalism and commitment are the lifeblood of our organisation. They are ready for further changes, and DBS hopes that the public will realise the benefits of those changes for years to come.

**Adrienne Kelbie**

**Chief Executive**

## Introduction

DBS was established in December 2012 under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA) ('the Act'). We operate from two sites, Liverpool and Darlington, and are responsible for the delivery of disclosure and barring functions on behalf of government.

The Act requires DBS, at the beginning of each financial year, to issue a business plan in relation to the proposed exercise of our functions over the coming year, and requires consultation with the Secretary of State before issuing the plan.

This Business Plan sets out priorities for 2015-16 and guides as to how we will undertake our statutory functions. Underpinned by our purpose the Plan shows the need to focus on implementing changes which will modernise our services, continue to improve our performance, and embed customer service to support operational delivery.

The annual Business Plan sits alongside the three-year Strategic Plan (2014-17) and sets the five priorities for 2015-16 and key activities under each priority that will be undertaken during the year. These detail how we will deliver and develop DBS functions as an integral part of government public protection services.

## Our Functions

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.

DBS delivers those functions by providing a service which enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make better informed, safer recruitment decisions. We provide information to enable employers to determine whether candidates are unsuitable or unable to undertake certain work; particularly those occupations involving contact with vulnerable groups, including children. We do this through our disclosure and barring functions where we:

- Issue over 4 million criminal record certificates per annum, with 70% of applications made electronically;
- Maintain a list of around 57,000 barred individuals, preventing such individuals from working or volunteering with children or vulnerable adults; and
- Have nearly 400,000 individuals subscribed to our online Update Service, providing portability and affordability of criminal record checks for some of the UK's lowest paid workers, particularly in the health and care sectors.

We operate disclosure functions for England, Wales, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man, and barring functions for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our functions as prescribed in legislation are:

- To hold and maintain a register of organisations who are able to submit applications for criminal records certificates.
- To issue three levels of certificates of criminal records:
  - **Basic certificate.** This is available for any position or purpose and contains 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). For applicants residing in or applying for work in England and Wales a Basic certificate is currently issued by Disclosure Scotland on behalf of DBS. This function is currently delegated to Disclosure Scotland until the end of December 2016.
  - **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, including children, and other positions involving a high degree of trust, for example, certain office holders. Enhanced certificates contain the same information as the Standard certificate but with the addition of relevant police information held by a police force and, in some cases, details of whether the individual is included in the lists of those barred from working with children and vulnerable groups.
- To reach considered decisions about whether an individual should be barred from engaging in regulated activity with children and/or adults and maintaining the children's and adults' barred lists.
- To bar any individual who has accepted a caution for or been convicted of an automatic barring offence (that does not allow representations).
- To consider for barring any individual who has accepted a caution for or been convicted of an automatic barring 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 vulnerable groups including children.

- To make decisions as to whether it is appropriate to remove a person from a barred list.
- To operate a system of identifying changes to Standard and Enhanced certificates, through the Update Service.

These functions are broadly described as ‘disclosure’ and ‘barring’ functions.

## How We Operate

DBS is 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 a Chair, executive and non-executive members.

The operation of DBS functions is delegated by the Board to the Chief Executive, who leads a Senior Management Team (SMT) of directors of relevant functions; these are Corporate Services, Finance and Commercial, Change, Operations Disclosure (based in Liverpool) and Operations Barring (based in Darlington). The Chief Executive also acts as Accounting Officer.

## Government Sponsorship

DBS, as an Arms Length Body (ALB), is sponsored by the Home Office. The relationship between the DBS and the Home Office is guided by a framework document which sets out respective roles and responsibilities and how the DBS and the Home Office will work with each other. This is supported by appropriate letters of delegation from the Home Office to the Chief Executive in terms of setting out the terms of financial delegation to spend money received by DBS from statutory fees.

The DBS Chair is responsible for ensuring that disclosure and barring policy is delivered by DBS. As established in the framework document, the Chair is responsible to the Home Secretary, and responsible for ensuring that policies and actions support the responsible Minister’s, and where relevant other Ministers’, wider strategic policies and to ensure that DBS operations are conducted with probity. The Chair meets with the responsible minister periodically, and will correspond with her on any areas of concern or of interest. In doing so the Chair works with and through the Home Office’s Safeguarding Director as lead for disclosure and barring policy and senior Sponsor for the organisation. The senior Sponsor has a standing invitation to attend the DBS Board.



## Our Objectives

### Our purpose:

We protect the public by ensuring that balanced suitability decisions are made on the right information.

### Our strategic objectives for 2014-17:

- Deliver excellent customer satisfaction
- Retain the confidence of government
- Create a strong performance culture
- Manage public funds efficiently

The effective operation of our functions is, and always will be, the prime objective of everyone at the DBS. Our aim is to continually improve how we deliver our functions. We have a number of core capabilities to support government in new areas of disclosure and barring policy delivery. These are:

1. Data matching.
2. Risk assessment – reviewing case information to assess the risk of harm or reoffending.
3. Decision making – using a structured process to make decisions on suitability.

Our Update Service provides automated updates to standard and enhanced disclosure certificates, which is portable by the individual for multiple authorised employers (including voluntary organisations), saving time and money. We intend to work with Home Office to identify how we can jointly take advantage of the opportunity that this presents for new services.

We have maintained our accreditation of our core operational processes through ISO 9001 and achieved accreditation for our casework in barring.

We strive to ensure that we are trusted to make accurate and safe decisions maintaining the integrity of the data we hold. We will continue to work with the Home Office in identifying areas of policy and services where DBS core capabilities may be utilised for the benefit of government and the public more generally, and will look to identify how our functions can be enhanced.

## Our Priorities for 2015-16

The first year of our Strategic Plan (2014-17) focussed on improving our functions and the capability of our people. The second year 2015-16, will focus on improving our services, engaging with our stakeholders and delivering our new IT system and associated ways of working. We will also support the Home Office regarding its policy intent.

Our main priority will always be the effective delivery of our disclosure and barring functions with the quality of our functions remaining a key principle. We use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that DBS works to high standards and we follow robust processes that embrace quality.

We do however recognise that we will in many instances be reliant on the quality of the data sources that we access and the information we are provided with. This places an additional requirement on us to work closely with data owners and providers to ensure that the purpose and use of information is reflected in robust data management standards and processes.

We have been enhancing our capabilities to be an organisation that is able to effectively handle opportunities and challenges. We recognise the fact that what we deliver, how we deliver and who we deliver to requires us to be more agile and responsive to changing requirements. As a deliverer of government policy we need to respond and adapt to changes in government priorities.

Our contract with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) became fully operational during 2014-15 providing technical and support services. TCS are in the process of developing a modernised solution to deliver increased benefits to DBS customers and our stakeholders. We will continue on this journey with focus in for example enhancing our management of commercial relationships.

This major modernisation programme with TCS (known as Release 1) is due for a phased delivery towards the end of 2015-16. It will provide a new IT platform and significant flexibility to develop and expand the DBS service to support government and the wider safeguarding agenda. This will also allow future realisation of efficiency gains and improvements.

Our existing IT systems are not joined up and data is difficult to manipulate. Release 1 will remove this constraint and enable DBS to use data to identify trends and patterns to support government and safeguarding. As we transition to a new IT platform we will ensure that we maintain high levels of service delivery for our customers.

Underpinned by our purpose, our priorities for 2015-16 show our ambition to: continue to enhance our role in safeguarding; ensure continued effective operation of all our functions; improve outcomes through our partners; develop further our focus on customers; and improve performance through our people. We will continue to focus on operational delivery whilst modernising our systems and the way we operate.

Our work this year is designed to set us firmly on the road to achieving the objectives in our Strategic Plan 2014-17, and to ensure we continue to deliver a high quality service across our range of core statutory functions.

The Business Plan is overseen by our Finance and Performance Committee, a committee of the Board, which monitors our progress against the activities throughout the year.

The priorities below and the activities which support them are the main pieces of work we will undertake to help us achieve our aims during 2015-16.

**Priority: Enhancing Safeguarding**, reflecting our aim to protect children and vulnerable adults with our safeguarding functions.

Our work in 2015-16 will include the following:

- Developing partnerships for joint safeguarding initiatives, building greater awareness, trust and influence through for example presentations at conferences and supporting the drafting of guidance;
- Using our stakeholder management framework to provide consistent co-ordination of the way we work with others;
- Implement recommendations from our independent review of our barring function to augment our service delivery;
- Launching an account management model to promote greater engagement with key stakeholders, share business intelligence and support policy development; and
- Realising the full potential of our data by developing and publishing insights from our datasets and information which can be used by government to inform national safeguarding policy and practice.

**Priority: Creating a Strong Performance Culture to enhance the Customer Experience**, reflecting the work we will continue this year to put in place the right structures, skills and relationships to enhance our capability and capacity. This theme also reflects the activities we will undertake to further understand what our customers value and how we can increase the level of satisfaction we provide to them.

Our work in 2015-16 will include the following:

- Continue our focus on customers, using insights drawn from our data and intelligence to maintain or improve satisfaction levels including undertaking periodic customer satisfaction surveys and achieving Customer Service Excellence accreditation through Cabinet Office;
- Continue with our investment in our staff by building capability through learning and development to enhance skills and performance;
- Developing further the relationship with our staff, measuring and responding to staff perceptions gained through undertaking a Pulse staff survey; and
- Reviewing our workforce planning strategy and models to enhance our flexibility to meet fluctuating service demands.

**Priority: Modernising our Services (Release 1)**, reflecting our work on service transition and changes to our operating systems and processes to provide a common platform to increase efficiency and customer experience.

Our work in 2015-16 will include the following:

- Developing and testing the platform and hosting for the new Release 1 system;
- Implementing the Release 1 system into barring and disclosure operations bringing online applications, faster processing of certificates and process efficiencies through automation and improved matching; and
- Enabling new capabilities including the flexibility to introduce new products and services.

**Priority: Enhancing our functions**, build our capability so we can undertake further work on behalf of government.

Our work in 2015-16 will include the following:

- Agreeing a joint transition plan with Disclosure Scotland for the transfer of Basic Checks to DBS prior to switchover in December 2016;
- Implementing a Barred List Check and a Barred List Notification Service;
- With the Home Office, explore options for obtaining information from abroad including a pilot, later in 2015, to obtain information from other EU countries when one of their nationals applies for an enhanced disclosure in relation to working with children.
- Delivering a new marketing strategy; and
- Developing a new IT strategy for the organisation to enhance organisational capability and leverage the data in support of policy opportunities.

**Priority: Improving our Criminal Records Performance (CRIM Project)**, reflecting that a key part of the time, cost and risk of our disclosure and barring processes is generated by gathering information held locally by police forces.

Our work in 2015-16 will include the following:

- Reviewing the existing police national database landscape for disclosure and barring to understand how DBS can best access and use the Police National Database now and in the future; and
- Taking forward a review of the current operating model to improve value for money.

## Risk Management

The risks to delivery of our priorities are identified and captured in the DBS Strategic and Corporate Risk Registers.

In applying our Risk Management Policy, DBS maintains a risk management process, which ensures that risks are identified, assessed, controlled or escalated, and managed or mitigated against.

In summary our risk management policy states:

- We are here to keep the public safe, support safeguarding organisations and the risk management culture we have built underpins and supports this;
- Our priority is to reduce those risks that impact on public protection, but we will also seek to minimise our financial, operational and reputational risks;
- We will ensure that all our people have an awareness and understanding of the risks that affect the public, our colleagues and our business;
- We will ensure that all our people are competent at managing risk; and
- We will ensure that all our activities are controlled using our risk management process and our people are empowered to tackle risks.

## Our People

In line with our Strategic Plan our focus this year will be on further developing the capability of our workforce to reflect the incoming changes to technology and related processes and creating a strong performance culture. This will be supported by a number of initiatives that support performance improvement and rewards behaviour that adds value to the customer.

We launched our new Performance Development Review (PDR) process in April 2015 and we will build on this through the development of a simplified competency framework and by introducing 360° feedback across the organisation.

We will also focus on the broader reward and recognition of employees, through introducing new mechanisms to recognise the great contributions our employees

make. This will be linked to the values we aspire to as an organisation which are: customer-focused; ambitious; accountable; professional; and trusted.

We will continue to make significant investment in management and leadership development, across all management grades and we commenced the delivery of these programmes in January 2015. All barrister caseworkers undertake training and are accredited by Teesside University for their Decision Making skills. This significant investment in time and money enables these skills to be adapted to other types of case working.

Alongside the above we recognise a need to address our absence levels which have increased over the last 12 months. We have established a Joint Working Party with the Trade Union to develop initiatives that we believe will support employees at work and in turn reduce absence levels. These include health and wellbeing promotion, benchmarking other companies to gather knowledge and developing our managers to ensure pro-active management of absence cases.

We will continue to focus on employee engagement and we will continue to undertake Pulse surveys which provide a good insight of staff views. We need to build on this and in 2015-16 we will be developing a staff engagement index to understand how engaged our workforce truly are and use this insight to develop targeted initiatives to improve further.

## Our Performance

### 2014-15 Performance

In 2014-15, we exceeded our four targets with a strong performance in the speed of service KPIs within our operations functions. The table below summarises our performance in 2014-15:

| Dimension  | Measure  | 2014-15 Target | 2014-15 Performance |
|------------|--|----------------|---------------------|
| Accuracy   | Disclosure certificate accuracy                    | 99.98%         | 99.99% (Achieved)   |
|            | Barrister case accuracy                            | 99.90%         | 100.00% (Achieved)  |
| Timeliness | % of all barrister cases closed in 63 working days | 65.00%         | 66.50% (Achieved)   |
|            | % of all disclosures issued in 40 working days     | 88.00%         | 95.20% (Achieved)   |

We were able to ensure 66.5% of all barrister cases were closed in 63 days against a target of 65% and for disclosures issued in 40 working days we achieved 95.2% against a target of 88%.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

In addition to our targets, we have developed a suite of KPIs which are aligned to our strategic objectives and reported and reviewed regularly by SMT and Board, and then published. We use these KPIs to drive improvement activities and to be transparent about the performance of the organisation.

As part of the ongoing development of our KPIs, we carried out our very first independent customer satisfaction survey of all our external customers during the year. We received responses from over 2,500 people, from every part of our operational service, right across barring and disclosure functions; 85% of our customers are satisfied. They also highly regard our services and professionalism, with 94% saying that DBS staff are professional, and 95% acknowledging that our staff are polite. 89% think DBS provides a valuable service that makes a real difference to public safety, by helping customers make effective employment and other decisions.

## 2015-16 Performance Measures and Targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Every year we review and refresh our targets and KPIs to ensure they remain relevant. We are ambitious and look to stretch ourselves further to match our expectations. The targets and KPIs emphasise the importance of the quality of our work and the decisions we make, and the increasing focus we place on customer service. We will continue our work on additional KPIs during the year to ensure they reflect our aspirations with further work planned on productivity and the external impact of our safeguarding decisions.

Our measures and targets for 2015-16 are:

| Dimension  | Measure  | 2015-16 Target                |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Accuracy   | Sample Check Error Rate ( Disclosure Certificates) | Less than or equal to 0.02%*  |
|            | Sample Check Error Rate ( Barring Decisions)       | Less than or equal to 0.50%** |
| Timeliness | % of all barring cases closed in 3 months          | 65.00%                        |
|            | % of all disclosures issued in 8 weeks             | 95.00%                        |

\*Target inverted for 2015-16 to recognise error rate rather than accuracy achievement

\*\*Measure refined for 2015-16.

## Budget Information 2015-16

| <b>Revenue</b>              | <b>£000s</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Income                      | 143,915      |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> party</b> |              |
| Supplier costs              | (42,288)     |
| Police costs                | (31,155)     |
| <b>Other direct costs</b>   |              |
| Pay costs                   | (30,642)     |
| Accommodation               | (4,899)      |
| Other programme costs       | (2,750)      |
| Legal & professional fees   | (1,242)      |
| IT                          | (20,118)     |
| Depreciation                | (7,734)      |
| Other costs                 | (2,487)      |
| Cost of capital             | 600          |

The budget above sets out our estimated costs to deliver our functional priorities this year, and process the levels of disclosure applications and barring referrals we anticipate receiving during the year.

We continue to strive to identify efficiencies and deliver a value for money service, and this year we plan to freeze fees at the same levels as 2014-15 despite absorbing inflationary increases in some of our underlying costs. We will review our funding model with a view to assist in determining fees for new products.

The development and deployment of Release 1 will also provide us with further opportunities in subsequent business plans to achieve efficiencies from modernising our services. These efficiencies will allow us to consider how we enhance our functions and amend our current products to meet Home Office and customer needs.