



DBS: happy to celebrate first year anniversary

On 1 December, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) celebrates its one-year anniversary having formed when the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) combined forces after the Coalition government recommended “scaling back [security checks] to commonsense levels.”

Disclosure and Barring Service’s Minister, Lord Taylor of Holbeach, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Criminal Information said:

“Since the merger of the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority last year, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has provided a valuable service to the public. The DBS has proven to be an important tool for employers, helping them to making informed recruitment decisions.

“Public protection is of paramount importance to this government, and the DBS is ensuring the safeguarding of some of the most vulnerable groups in our society.”

The organisation, which operates in Liverpool and Darlington and issues around 4m DBS certificates every year and currently deals with about 3,000 cases every month in Barring, has achieved significant outcomes in its first year.

Two new services came into play at the DBS, which have helped to modernise processes. Customers can now get criminality checks faster with the Update Service (launched in June), and applicants also get an opportunity to review their certificate information before it’s presented to the employer via the ‘Applicant Only Certificate’, (as a result of the Protection of Freedoms Act).

But the DBS hasn’t achieved this alone. Its strong relationships with its 3,800 registered bodies and 18 keepers of registers and statutory authorities have developed over the year. Partnerships to help broker security checks or understand the barring operation has extended into new sectors and continues to grow. A pioneering project with the NHS Electronic Staff Record Programme (the national NHS Workforce System), will endeavour to support the current safeguarding arrangements for health workers for instance.

Currently, more than 35,000 extra cases are now being reviewed every month, which means the DBS is working harder to help employers to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. Also, previously, the ISA saw an average time of 71 days to close a traditionally lengthy process for discretionary cases, which involve a rigorous five-stage decision-making process and substantial information gathering. This time has been reduced to an average of 66 days.

“In just one year, the DBS has delivered everything we said we would thanks to strong stakeholder relations with registered bodies and referral bodies, and because our people care about what we do and always deliver what we promise,” said Adrienne Kelbie, chief executive of the DBS. “I’m immensely proud of what we’ve achieved this year, and look forward to strong performance in years to come.”

“Helping to protect vulnerable groups and children and assisting employers to make safe recruitment decisions is critical work and the DBS does it better than anyone. We’re proving ourselves all the time – as our recent work for the US Embassy illustrates – and I am confident that our track record for providing the most accurate criminality checks and supporting employers to make secure employment decisions will continue to develop.”

In the coming years, DBS will seek to become even more modernised and capable of delivering its services in a more demanding world.