



Disclosure & Barring Service

DBS News

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by **Adrienne Kelbie**,
Chief Executive

Centre of excellence: what our journey will mean for you



You'll have seen from the [DBS Strategic Plan](#) that we want to become a centre of excellence by 2017. But what does that really mean? The DBS Chief Executive, Adrienne Kelbie, explains.

Safeguarding is, rightly, a very hot topic. We've all shuddered at the scandals that have led to the Goddard Inquiry, and know we need to do more to protect our children and vulnerable adults. This drives us, every single day, to better meet the needs of employers, applicants and the public. Standing still is not an option.

This is why we're committed to becoming a centre of excellence. We want to be better at everything we do; provide you with quicker services, reduce errors, improve our customer service, avoid fee increases. To do this, we need to [upgrade our technology](#), which in itself will improve the update service, and create more choice online.

I am acutely aware that delays have a big impact on our Registered Bodies (RB) and their applicants. We have taken big steps to improve the speed at which we process applications. So this year, we've set ourselves a tougher target in response to your feedback.

The main reason for delays with applications lies with a few of our police units, and we've [prioritised support for the five forces](#) which have struggled in recent months. We know this

is working, because our turnaround times are improving, and complaints have decreased by 55% in just 3 months.

Accuracy also remains critical to our purpose. Our Quality Support teams help us make sure we meet the very high standards we set for ourselves – and maintain our ISO 9001 certification for disclosure production and barring operations Quality Management System processes. It's a delicate balance; but we know that quality, reliable outputs, combined with a fast process, help you make more objective employment decisions on the right suitability information.

And to help us get things right, we've asked many of you to take part in our [Ipsos MORI survey](#). Thank you for taking the time to tell us what's important to you. 89% of you say we provide a valuable service that makes a real difference to public safety – a real endorsement of our purpose. And although we are delighted with the results, you have also given us plenty to work with, highlighting and prioritising areas of focus.

I hope you will continue to share your thoughts, both in future surveys and by [getting in touch](#) at any time. Listening to you will help us to improve the service we provide to you, the government, our customers - and the public we work so hard to protect. Thank you for making a difference.

In May, we introduced a new telephone process, with immediate impact on our service to customers. As an example, the average abandonment rate for our disputes call line reduced by 45% in May and a further 50% in June - now down to 2% which exceeds our 5% target



Complaints about police delays decreased by 55% in just 3 months



by **Tom Finnigan**,
Head of Programme

Digital transformation: next steps into the future

One of our biggest projects at the moment, as you may know, is the launch of our online portal. Tom Finnigan, explains what the digital move will mean for you.

You may be familiar with the term 'Digital by Default', which means many public bodies and government services are making the move to a digital environment. A recent example that many of us are familiar with, is the DVLA's very successful transition from paper tax discs into [online vehicle tax services](#) – safely, securely, and efficiently.

For DBS, the process is very similar. The launch of our portal will bring many benefits, one of which is an additional application route to paper and e-bulk: the option to submit digital DBS applications.

And it doesn't stop there.

As a Registered Body (RB), Police Force or Keeper of Register, you will benefit from efficiencies for your business and better access to our services. But you will also see improvements in the speed, quality and security of the information we process for you. We will become even faster in our certificate turnaround times, more accurate,

and even more rigorous in our barring decisions.

Collaboration and intelligence sharing with our partners and other agencies will also become more efficient, with data at our fingertips.

Undoubtedly, this will impact positively on the outcomes for your applicants – and the people we are all here to protect.

As we approach testing stage, over the coming weeks we will be asking some of you to get more involved.

We know you want to find out more and we will be sharing more about how you will benefit from the portal and the changes to our existing products and services soon. In the meantime, do look out for further updates in the next issue of DBS news, email bulletins and our website www.gov.uk/dbs

We are listening to your feedback about the update service and have already made some improvements. The new portal will bring even further changes to better meet your needs

Digital transformation

next steps into the future

From around the network

collaboration in action

From around the network: collaboration in action



by **Linda Hackett**,
Operational Policy Advisor

Writing safe recruitment guidance can be complex. Our Policy team often works with other organisations to help get it right. Linda Hackett tells us how.

We've supported a number of organisations to develop guidance in the past, including Department for Education, NHS Employers and Department of Health.

A great example is '[Recruiting safely and fairly: a practical guide to employing ex-offenders](#)' - one of our most recent collaborations with the crime reduction charity, Nacro. Published in May, the guide is a great tool for employers to recruit safely and confidently when considering individuals with criminal records.

If you're developing safe recruitment guidance that affects a wide spectrum of employers and individuals, and think you need help, email customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk to find out if we can offer support.

by **Ian Johnston**,
Director for Operations (Disclosure)

Police performance
what we are doing
to reduce delays



Police performance: what we are doing to reduce delays

Out of the 5 underperforming PDUs, 3 have now met their agreed service levels or are on track to recover by the end of this quarter

Complaints relating to poor police performance have reduced by 55% in just 3 months

We are funding an additional 7 full time employees for one of the underperforming PDUs. During March, this PDU closed 3110 applications above their expected output levels

Since the beginning of this year, we have been working closely with our Police Disclosure Units (PDUs) to address delays with DBS checks. Ian Johnston explains what we are doing to improve police performance.

We know delays with DBS checks have an impact on your business. Most of the complaints we receive from our partners and applicants are in relation to turnaround times linked to poor police performance.

While the vast majority have achieved their targets for processing disclosure checks, a small number of PDUs need to improve.

PDU performance can fluctuate monthly, and backlogs can be linked to one - or usually a combination - of the following:

- ▶ fluctuations in demand for DBS checks, over and above forecast volumes
- ▶ local recruitment and retention issues
- ▶ system changes, additions, upgrades, technical and legislative changes to processes and practices

So, what can we do to help fix it? Our dedicated police team is working closely with underperforming PDUs to find short and long term solutions to these issues.

Together, and with the support of the Home Office, we've created improvement plans to put things right.

Some of the measures we're taking include:

- ▶ improving existing staff training, recruitment and retention, as well as training staff from other forces, to provide contingency and support with reducing the backlog
- ▶ streamlining PDU systems and processes to ensure a swift, efficient and quality output - and introducing pilot schemes to assess outcomes, before rolling out to all forces
- ▶ escalating issues to Chief Constables, where necessary

We know it's already working. Out of the 5 underperforming PDUs, 3 have now met their agreed service levels or are on track to recover by the end of this quarter. Complaints relating to poor police performance have reduced from 304 in February, to 138 in May – a very encouraging 55% decrease in just 3 months.

This is just the beginning. We will continue to work with PDUs to do all we can to reduce delays even further and ensure the best possible service to you – and your applicants.

Keep an eye on how we're doing by checking our [police performance results](#), published monthly on our website.

Suggestions or comments

If you have any suggestions or comments about our work with PDUs, please get in touch with our Police Liaison team, by emailing policeliasonsteam@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

by **Suzanne Gordon**,
Head of Customer Services & Investigations



Improving your experience
thank you for
having your say

Improving your experience: thank you for having your say

We know the work we do makes a difference to so many people – but we wanted to put it to the test. So, in March, we ran our very first independent customer satisfaction survey with Ipsos MORI. Suzanne Gordon shares the results.

Thank you to those of you who shared your views in our latest survey - we had some really positive results that we can now build on. We're pleased to share that 89% of you say we provide a valuable service that makes a real difference to public safety, by helping organisations make informed suitability and safeguarding decisions. It's very encouraging to have such an endorsement and independent validation from our customers.

We received responses from over 2,500 customers and suppliers. Respondents came from far and wide, across both our disclosure and barring functions, including disclosure applicants, referred individuals, Registered Bodies (RBs), organisations who referred people for barring, employers, and other government departments.

We now know that:

- ▶ **85% of our customers, across disclosure and barring, are satisfied**
- ▶ **94% of you say we are professional**
- ▶ **95% of you say we are polite**
- ▶ **73% of you consider speed to be more important than cost**
- ▶ **those dissatisfied, were mainly applicants who waited a long time for their DBS certificates**

We also have some great insights to help us get better in the areas that are important to you.

What next?

We've listened - and we want to act quickly on the valuable feedback and suggestions you shared with us.

We have already started setting targets and measures for improvement based on what you told us – with speed, accuracy and accessibility as the key emerging themes.

To respond to your concerns, we've introduced additional customer service and complaints training, and extra resourcing on our front line team to reduce call waiting times even further. We are re-assessing the guidance and information that we publish, so that it is more accessible to all users. This will have a big impact on call waiting times, as many user needs will be addressed online.

And while we always need to carefully balance safeguarding needs with a speedy service - to ensure we give you the right information to make suitability decisions - we will continue working with our partners to address the sources of those major delays.

Our new portal will help us to improve accuracy and turnaround times for barring decisions and disclosure certificates, while avoiding fee increases. But we also need RBs to help us drive this down further, by making sure all countersigned application forms are sent to us as soon as possible.

We look forward to sharing more updates with you over the next few months, through email and news stories on www.gov.uk/dbs.

Our new information booklets have helped to answer some of these queries. We are also promoting your top queries on our website, alongside examples of eligibility case studies, to help meet user needs online and reduce call waiting times for general enquires



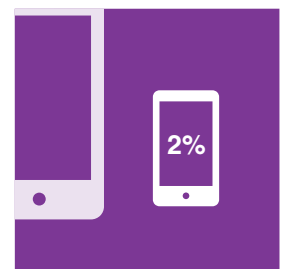
85% of our customers are happy



7% reduction in reprint requests



81% reduction in upheld applicant postcode disputes



50% reduction in call abandonment rate, down to 2% in June

by **Angie Geraghty**,
Head of Fraud Investigation

Fraud Team success

Our Fraud Team works closely with partners, customers, the police and other government departments to improve safeguarding outcomes. Angie Geraghty gives us a glimpse into what the team has helped to achieve over the last three months.

We want to ensure DBS certificates are reliable, credible, and usable tools that employers can rely on to make balanced suitability decisions. But we also know that, as with most documents, our certificates can be vulnerable in the hands of fraudsters.

Qualified to Professional Accredited Counter Fraud Specialist (ACFS) status, all members of our Fraud Team work tirelessly to protect the integrity of our products. At the same time, they work with criminal justice agencies across the country to bring fraudsters to justice. Here are a few examples of this work.

We have been working with the National Crime Agency (NCA) since March, to support a child protection investigation into people suspected of having a sexual interest in children, who are using techniques to prevent their identification online. We have carried out priority checks on multiple names and addresses, with a direct impact on the speed and direction of this safeguarding investigation.

In April, one of our RBs alerted us to a bogus locum doctor who was working in a hospital with a tampered DBS certificate. We took immediate action to help secure an arrest, working in conjunction with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), the police and General Medical Council (GMC). He's since been found guilty of fraud, with 21 charges against him, and is awaiting sentence.

More recently, in June, officers advised us of 10 fraud charges made against an applicant who had made multiple applications using a counterfeit French passport and National Insurance card. He was working as a carer in the London area and is due back in Court in July.

Look out for more stories about the achievements of our Fraud Team in future issues of DBS News.

If you suspect fraudulent activity involving a DBS process, please email FDIT@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

Over the last 3 months, we have helped to secure actions against over 230 people who committed a number of fraudulent offences

Fraud Team success

230 fraudsters worse off



Reaching out

by **Pukul Rana**,
Stakeholder
Relations Manager



Having been in post for a few months, Pukul Rana has been out and about to listen to what you have to say.

Over the last couple of months, we have been doing what we promised some time ago: coming out to exhibitions and sector events, to listen to your thoughts and challenges.

We have been up and down the country at the NSPCC's "How Safe are our Children" conference, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)'s national conference, and the Local Government Association (LGA)'s national conference. It was privilege to meet and talk to so many of the people who use our services day in, day out, and to find out more about how we can help you.

We are developing an events programme for next year, so if you think there is an exhibition or conference we should be at, please email communications@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

While on the road, we tested out our 4 new publications, packed full of the information you asked to see:

[DBS checks: case studies](#)

[DBS barring: making a referral](#)

[DBS: who we are and what we do](#)

[Disclosure application process for volunteers](#)

Although we've had great feedback so far, we would love to know what you think – as well as any additions to the family that you would like to see in future. To share your thoughts or request a hard copy of the booklets, email us at communications@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

What YOU wanted to know: this quarter's top three queries



Top three
queries

1 Is an overseas applicant required to have a DBS check?

Not in all cases. Applicants will be asked to have a DBS checks in line with their employer's HR policy.

Sometimes this is a mandatory part of their recruitment terms and conditions, but some employers will need to follow the rules laid down by their governing body and statutory regulations. Where that applies, a DBS check is required before employment can begin, whether the applicant is from overseas or from the UK.

You will need to ensure that you have viewed the overseas applicant's original ID documents, prior to submitting the application request for a DBS check.

Although it doesn't replace a DBS check, you can also ask applicants from overseas to get a criminal record check, or a 'Certificate of Good Character', from their country of origin. It may also be possible to get a check through the relevant embassy in the UK, but the applicant must give their permission.

Processes do vary for different countries, so please visit GOV.UK to find out more about [criminal record checks abroad](#).

2 I have recently dismissed one of my employees from regulated activity. I have notified the local authority safeguarding team. Do I need to do anything else?

Yes. As well as informing the relevant professional regulator or local authority safeguarding team, you must also make a [safeguarding referral to DBS](#) – this is really important.

If you are an employer or volunteer manager, it is your duty to make a [safeguarding referral to DBS](#) when a person is removed from 'regulated activity' due to a safeguarding concern. This is irrespective of whether you have referred the person to a professional regulator or local authority safeguarding team.

Please ensure that you make any referrals to us as quickly as possible, so that we can consider if that person should be included in a barred list or not. This helps us to prevent unsuitable people from working or volunteering with vulnerable groups, including children.

To make a referral, you will need to complete the form and post it to us, together with any supporting documentation. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days, please contact us on 01325 953795 to make sure we have received the referral.

3 I work for a Registered Body (not the applicant's employer) and you have recently written to me for further information about a DBS application. Can I ask the employer to respond to you as they hold all the information?

No. This will delay the application.

We can only accept correspondence from an RB's lead or countersignatory - specifically the person who signed the application. Employers who are not the lead or countersignatory cannot respond directly for clarifications, either by letter or phone. This is both because of data protection constraints, and the requirement for endorsement by the countersignatory.

When we write to you for further information or clarification about a DBS application, please make sure you respond directly, other than asking the employer to do so. This will avoid multiple handling of conflicts and reduce delays in the application process, helping us to provide the best possible service to you – and the end user.

If you have a question you'd like us to feature in the next issue of DBS News, please get in touch by emailing communications@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

Contact

Address
PO Box 110
Liverpool L69 3EF

For Disclosure issues and information.
Please Phone: [these are our **new numbers**]

DBS helpline
03000 200 190

Welsh language line
03000 200 191

Minicom
03000 200 192

Email
customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

Website
www.gov.uk/dbs

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

Don't miss out on our latest updates

Register to get email alerts by signing up to our **e-database**. Tell us which sector you work in and what information interests you, so you can keep up-to-date.

Keep your registration details up-to-date

If you are a registered body, you need to keep your details updated. Take a look at our **employer's guide for more information**.