



Disclosure &  
Barring Service

# **DBS Business Plan 2016-17**

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## Foreword

We strive to be an efficient and trusted supplier of information services to support safe employment decisions. The safeguarding dangers facing our communities have never been more prominent and we are committed to playing a vital role in protecting the public and helping government face this complex challenge.

We are pleased to report that in the last year of our 2014-17 Strategic Plan, we are on track to deliver our four objectives and to progress towards being a centre of excellence.

Operationally, we performed well against our published service standards last year and met four out of five. However, we narrowly missed our target of issuing 95% of Disclosures within 8 weeks due to a small number of police forces who experienced particular difficulties in meeting their target turnaround time for enhanced DBS checks. This caused significant delays in issuing certificates and a rise in complaints and correspondence. We will continue to support forces to resolve their operational issues as matter of priority.

We have experienced a considerable delay with the implementation of our new IT system which has consumed additional time and effort as part of the re-planning exercise. As one of our priorities, we will continue to work with our partners, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), to implement the new system and enhance the work we do to protect the public and provide better access to those who refer barring cases and send disclosure applications. This will include capability for us to deliver new systems for Basic checks and continue to work with the Home Office to consider the introduction of reforms made by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

We commissioned two independent reviews this year. The majority of recommendations from the 'Independent Review of Barring' have been implemented and we will deliver the remaining actions during the first quarter of 2016/17. Following the discovery that some files had been incorrectly disposed of, primarily by our predecessor the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), we sought a review of our Data Retention Policy. We are confident that our existing procedures and the swift implementation of the recommendations will prevent this happening again.

We have provided support to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) by assisting in the establishment of two regional offices and stand ready to share information in accordance with appropriate protocols.

Our Board has been strengthened with two new non executive members who both bring with them specialist skills in safeguarding.

We will continue to develop the capability of our managers and leaders to ensure an agile and high performing organisation.

We work closely with Home Office as DBS Sponsor and continue to support policy development and safeguarding.

**Adele Downey, Chief Executive**

**Bill Griffiths, Chair**

**15 November 2016**

## Background

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.

### **Our purpose:**

We are responsible for the delivery of disclosure and barring functions on behalf of government. DBS was established in December 2012 under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 ('the Act') from the combination of the Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority, and operates from two sites, in Liverpool and Darlington.

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 4.2 million criminal record certificates per annum, with 72% of applications made electronically;
- Maintain a list of around 60,000 barred individuals, preventing such individuals from working or volunteering with children or vulnerable adults;
- Have nearly 700,000 individuals subscribed to our online Update Service, providing portability and affordability of criminal record checks.

*(Figures relate to 2015/16)*

## Strategic context

DBS publishes a business plan to set out our objectives over the coming year, our key performance targets, budget information and the risks to the achievement of our plan.

This Business Plan sets our priorities for 2016-17 to support our desire to become Government's Centre of Excellence for suitability information. As this represents the final year of our strategic plan (2014-17), we have considered our priorities within the context of our four existing strategic objectives, which are:

1. Deliver Excellent Customer Satisfaction
2. Retain the Confidence of Government
3. Create a Strong Performance Culture
4. Manage Public Funds Efficiently

The plan will also show how we are developing our three core capabilities:

1. **Criminal information provision**, including the launch of the Basic Disclosure product in 2017
2. **Decision making**, including the implementation of the findings from a review of our barring processes
3. **Risk assessment**, standing ready to revise our processes to reflect changes in the legislative and policy environment.

### 1. Deliver Excellent Customer Satisfaction

We strive to deliver excellent customer satisfaction, with the customer always at the heart of service provision. We will continue to develop our products and services always ensuring that we deliver so they are accessible, reliable, timely and good value for money.

In 2015 we successfully achieved Customer Service Excellence accreditation for DBS. This provides a baseline to build on strong customer service practices that are embedded across DBS, as well as driving a culture of customer focus, continuous improvement and performance delivery.

We very much recognise the impact of poor police performance on customers. Since 2015, the Metropolitan Police Service have not met their turnaround time on enhanced disclosures. This had a significant impact on our customers, with complaints and correspondence rising. We remain committed to working closely with underperforming forces to ensure a continued focus on this.

We completed an external review of police funding and performance and we also intend to use this to drive improvements in the quality and timeliness of Police performance during 2016/17.

We did not implement our modernised IT solution as planned in 2015/16 due to a number of issues encountered by our outsourced supplier. The performance of our supplier is monitored closely and a revised implementation plan is in place to introduce the system in 2017. We recognise the challenge to the business and our stakeholders as we transition to this new system and are planning accordingly.

The IT solution will provide a platform to support service improvements, enhancing the customer experience and enable the implementation of our strategic plan for 2017-2020. As system development progresses we will continually review its functionality to ensure that the business is able to realise efficiencies and benefits post deployment. We will be reviewing with Home Office how IT would best be delivered within DBS. We have started work on progressing transition of Basic Disclosures ready for 2017. For the first time applicants residing or working in England and Wales will be able to apply directly to DBS for a Basic certificate.

**Priorities in 2016/17:**

We will build upon the progress made by focussing on:

- Continuing the transition to the modernised IT system, using the flexibility it offers to launch new products to enhance safeguarding, including Basic Disclosures in 2017;
- Implementing a revised service level agreement with the Police Disclosure Units, introducing a balanced scorecard to measure performance, quality, value for money for our customers;
- Delivering a Corporate Account and Strategic Relationship Management model so that we are better able to understand and respond to the needs of our customers and stakeholders;
- Implementing a corporate Quality Assurance Framework to ensure we employ a more coordinated and focussed approach to Quality and bring together all aspects of quality assurance under a single framework.

## 2. Retain the confidence of government

DBS is a delivery body for government policy and it is essential that we meet the expectations of ministers, the Home Office and wider government.

In order to maintain the confidence of government we need to continue to deliver excellent services and ensure information is provided speedily. Alongside this we need to build greater awareness, trust and influence to enhance our reputation for safeguarding excellence and work with the Home Office and government to help develop policy to improve public protection services. This includes supporting the delivery of the government's policy commitments on counter extremism.

Managing and sharing data securely and appropriately is of critical importance to our reputation and we place the highest priority on the integrity of our data and information governance. Following incorrect destruction of some records last year, we engaged consultants Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) to review our data retention policies.

In response to the PwC recommendations we are developing an Information Management strategy to ensure the secure management of our data and to fully exploit our information resources to help inform policy development. We will also be developing new data sets to enable us to respond quickly to Parliamentary Questions and to provide prompt information for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

We will be recruiting two new non-executive members to our Board and a new Chief Executive and Director for Operations (Barring) for our Senior Management Team (SMT). The smooth transition of our new Board and SMT members into our business is a high priority, to enable us to achieve our objectives, and retain the confidence of government.

We have undertaken a review of our barring functions to ensure we meet our statutory responsibilities and identify areas for improvement. As a result of our barring review we have made improvements to our customer service and our stakeholder engagement. We have revised our guidance, introduced improved tools to help our decision making, and introduced a revised Specialist Assessment process. Work is ongoing to review our Structured Judgement Process and to recruit additional members of our expert panel to advise on matters of complexity.



We have taken part in a pilot project trialling improved sharing of criminality information with European Union (EU) Member States to ensure that serious offences, committed outside of the UK, are available to employers when an individual seeks work with vulnerable groups. We are evaluating the outcomes with Home Office. We are preparing for the transition of Basic Checks from Disclosure Scotland to DBS in 2017.

**Priorities in 2016/17:**

We will build upon the progress made by focussing on:

- Developing our role in providing influential advice to inform government policy;
- Completing the implementation of findings from the barring review;
- Developing our Strategic Plan 2017-2020;
- Implementing recommendations of PwC's review of data retention including an Information Management strategy to fully exploit our information resources, the benefits of which will be fully realised over the 2017-2020 strategic period.

### 3. Creating a Strong Performance Culture

To create a strong performance culture we will focus on creating a systematic approach to managing the performance and engagement of the organisation's services, teams and individuals. We will continue to ensure that we have the right organisational structure in place with teams in the right functional areas, to ensure an agile and high performing organisation.

We need to make use of the rich analytical data and insights that we have in terms of both our customer base and our employees. We will further develop our analytical skills and develop metrics to inform our People Strategy and show the journey we are taking.

In 2015/16 we continued to improve the capability of our managers and leaders and will build on this in 2016/17 through our leadership development programme. We have begun to reduce the level and cost of absenteeism and plan to improve this further.

We have refreshed the Performance Development Review Pilot that was launched in April 2015 which will engage staff to improve performance at an individual and team level within DBS. This will be linked to the characteristics we aspire to as an organisation which are: customer-focused; ambitious; accountable; professional; and trusted.

For the first time, we have also measured our employee engagement index. The employment engagement index, for which we scored 58%, tells us how our staff view working for DBS. This rating compares favourably with other government departments and reflects our view that the DBS is a great place to work. However, we will continue to focus on employee engagement to build on this and show our staff we have understood any concerns and want to improve.

We will further embed strategic workforce planning in the organisation, in order to ensure we have the right workforce, with the right reward strategies and succession plans to support our business as it responds to new challenges and changes in product base.

We do face potential challenges during 2016/17 and areas of focus for HR and management teams are sickness absence, performance management and the development of our managers and leaders.

We will need to ensure the alignment of our external relations messaging and insight to benefit both our customers and strategic business decisions.

#### **Priorities in 2016/17**

We will build upon the progress made by focussing upon:

- Extending the capability of our leaders and managers;
- Improving performance management;
- Delivering higher employee engagement;
- Enhancing strategic workforce planning.

## 4. Manage Public Funds Efficiently

We will ensure that DBS manages public funds with probity and in the public interest in carrying out its statutory safeguarding function. By maintaining public funds efficiently with a value for money approach, DBS is able to maintain the government's trust, ensuring a sustainable financial future and minimising the costs of its services to its customers. We have already made some inroads with our value for money agenda by maintaining fee levels since April 2011 while absorbing increases in referrals, other activities and services to the public.

In 2015/16, we put in place the foundations that will further strengthen our financial strategy in the coming year. This included starting to build a more professional and customer focused finance function, as well as enhancing some of our financial modelling methodologies. As part of this work, we are developing a process for better aligning fees with product costs across the range of services offered. We will build upon this work as we develop an overarching financial strategy as part of our plans for 2016-17. We would also expect this to feature as part of the framework agreement with Home Office when it is next refreshed.

During 2015-16, the Office for National Statistics undertook a review of our status, and concluded that we should be classified as a Central Government Body for National Accounts purposes. The impact of this is that DBS now counts as part of the wider Home Office for capital budgeting purposes. As these resources are finite, this presents a risk that additional requests to fund existing projects could be constrained. Future DBS investment requirements will now be evaluated against wider Home Office priorities, and we will therefore need to demonstrate clearly that any proposed expenditure will deliver value for taxpayers' money.

We continue to focus our efforts on the introduction of technology to support our digital ambition and we will develop our approach to modernisation of systems, processes and working environment and continuously improve the way we use our data to make most effective use of our capabilities.

### **Priorities in 2016/17**

We will build upon the progress made by focussing on:

- Developing and implementing a long term financial strategy;
- Establishing a value for money programme;
- Procuring replacements contracts to replace existing service contracts and to support the hosting of our operating system.

## Performance

Key aspects of our overall performance (including operational productivity) are monitored by our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are reported on the GOV.UK website. 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. Our KPIs are agreed with the Minister and cover timeliness and quality of key aspects of our operational services.

Maintaining quality and the timeliness of our core services provides the focus of our performance arrangements, and over the last three years, we have set challenging performance levels. In addition to retaining the same performance measures for 2016/17 we have included an additional disclosure timeliness measure to provide a more rounded view of operational performance. In 2015-16, we met or exceeded four out of five performance targets. The table below summarises our 2015-16 performance and 2016-17 targets:

Focus	Measures	2015-16 Targets	2014-15 Performance	2015-16 Performance	2016-17 Targets
<b>Accuracy</b>	Sample Check Error Rate: Disclosure Certificates*	$\leq 0.02\%$	0.01%	0.01%	$\leq 0.02\%$
	Sample Check Error Rate—Barring Decisions**	$\leq 0.50\%$	KPI not measured	0.30%	$\leq 0.50\%$
<b>Timeliness</b>	% of Barring Cases Concluded in 3 Months	65.00%	66.50%	66.23%	65.00%
	% of Disclosure certificates Issued in 8 Weeks	95.00%	95.20%	94.80%	95.00%
	% of Disclosure certificates issued 3 Weeks***	85.00%	85.30%	86.90%	86.00%

\* This measures the accuracy of a sample of issued disclosure certificates and assesses whether the correct data source information has been presented on the certificate.

\*\* This measures the proportion of barring cases selected for a first round of quality checking where the decision is subsequently changed before the case is finalised measured against the total sample set of cases quality checked at this stage.

\*\*\* added to published scorecard for 2016-17

## Risk management

The risks to delivery of our priorities are identified and captured in the DBS Strategic and Corporate Risk Registers, which are managed monthly via the Risk Improvement Forum and Senior Management Team. The risk management process is assured by the Audit and Risk Committee to Board.

In applying our Risk Management Policy, DBS maintains a risk management process. This 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.

In delivering our business plan, the critical success factors include:

- Delivery of a modernised IT solution and outsourced services to our time and quality standards;
- Improved police performance with a continued focus and monitoring of their timeliness and efficiency;
- Responding effectively to change in government policy and legislation including the recent filtering judgment;
- Proactively managing the demand for our current and new services to avoid increases in work in progress;
- Keeping our data secure; and
- Ensuring we have the right people in place to support our organisation to achieve its centre of excellence ambitions.

## Budget Information 2016-17

Revenue	£000s
Income	160,372
3 <sup>rd</sup> party	
Supplier costs	(43,246)
Police costs	(33,116)
<b>Other direct costs</b>	
Pay costs	(34,366)
Accommodation	(4,296)
Other programme costs	(2,499)
Legal & professional fees	(1,323)
IT	(26,151)
Depreciation	(10,960)
Other costs	(3,575)
Cost of capital	840

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 2015-16 despite absorbing inflationary increases in some of our underlying costs. In line with Managing Public Money we will continue to review fees on a yearly basis and take action if required.

The development and deployment of Release 1 during 2017 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.