



Disclosure &  
Barring Service



# DBS STRATEGY 2025 TO 2028

MAKING RECRUITMENT AND  
EMPLOYMENT SAFER



# CONTENTS

1. Foreword from the DBS Chairman	4
2. Chief Executive's Introduction	8
3. Wider Context for Developing our Strategy	12
4. Our Strategic Framework	14
Our Purpose	14
Our Vision	14
Our Strategic Impacts by 2028	16
Our Strategic Objectives	16
5. Our Values, Behaviours, and Equality Objectives	18
6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at DBS	20
7. Strategic Objective 1: Our Products and Services	22
8. Strategic Objective 2: Being Visible, Trusted, and Influential	26
9. Strategic Objective 3: Delivering through Innovative Technology	30
10. Strategic Objective 4: Customer Data and Insight Led	32
11. Strategic Objective 5: Being People-Focused	36
12. Supporting Our Strategy	40
13. Our Strategy on a Page	42





# 1. A FOREWORD FROM THE DBS CHAIRMAN, DR GILLIAN FAIRFIELD

**As we embark on our journey over the next 3 years at the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), we remain committed to the contributions we make to safeguarding the most vulnerable in our society.**

Our purpose and vision as an organisation have not faltered, and their importance has only evolved since their initial creation in our 2020-25 strategy:

“Protecting the public by helping employers make safer recruitment and employment decisions, and by barring individuals who pose a risk to vulnerable people.”

Our commitment to making recruitment and employment safer is the central driver for all that we do within DBS.

In light of the new government’s focus on economic growth and crime prevention and rehabilitation, we are also focused on providing improved value for money and continuing to improve our products and services to both protect the vulnerable and enable people to safely enter employment.

In line with this vision, we will continue to enhance the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of our services across DBS, while also fostering an organisation that is more inclusive, more transparent, and more responsive. The decisions we take and the changes we make across the next 3 years will pave the way for DBS and its position within the safeguarding landscape for many years to come.

Through defining the strategic impacts we want to make – contributing to lowering the risk of harm, enabling individuals to safely enter employment, protecting the right to rehabilitation, and contributing to economic growth – this 3-year strategy will show how we are





**“Through defining the strategic impacts, we want to make – contributing to lowering the risk of harm, enabling individuals to safely enter employment, protecting the right to rehabilitation, and contributing to economic growth – this 3-year strategy will show how we are committed to embracing innovation, making informed, data-driven decisions, and ensuring we remain at the forefront of safeguarding and protection.”**

committed to embracing innovation, making informed, data-driven decisions, and ensuring we remain at the forefront of safeguarding and protection, as a trusted organisation. The strategy was co-created with our staff and has been supported by insight from our various partners, and throughout, you will find our ambitions to be achieved by 2028, outlining the differences that we can make.

Everything that we do within DBS, from developing our strategic intent, to the day-to-day operational delivery of our services, is underpinned by constant considerations of safeguarding, quality, sustainability, value for money, and diversity and inclusion. Customers will

continue to be at the forefront of these considerations and the decisions we make. Accessibility is also a golden thread throughout this strategy, ensuring we continue to make our services more accessible for everyone that needs to access them, with the right information available, at a time and in a way that suits those needing to access it.

The development of improved technology is also a key consideration throughout this strategy to support the delivery of our products and services, alongside supporting our workforce. We want our people to feel empowered, and valued for the work they do, and I thank our staff for their contributions every day, and for the insight they provided

as part of developing this new 3-year strategy, to which they are a central part.

We hope you find this strategy of interest, and that the objectives and actions detailed throughout show the drive and commitment we have as an organisation to further embrace our purpose and vision of making recruitment and employment safer.

As with our previous strategy, we are ambitious in our approach but that ambition stems from understanding, and wanting to develop, the important contributions we make within the safeguarding landscape, as well as the difference we can truly make for our partners and customers, with the unwavering support of our people within DBS.

## 2. AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ERIC ROBINSON



**Through the disclosure and barring functions we carry out across the organisation, DBS has a unique safeguarding role. The work we do, day in and day out, provides significant protection to the public and provides support to employers.**

Last year, we issued almost 7.4m DBS certificates – an increase of 30% compared to 2020 when we launched our first strategy. We have almost 3 million people subscribed to our Update Service, and we also maintain the Children’s and Adults’ Barred Lists that now include almost 100,000 people, an increase of over 20% increase compared to when we launched our last strategy. We directly employ over 1200 members of staff to deliver these services and through individual police force disclosure units, we also indirectly employ just under 1300 members of staff to support the effective processing of Enhanced and Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS checks.

Over the last 5 years, the numbers of DBS checks and barring referrals have increased, but so too has the quality of our services with DBS making significant strides in recent years. This has been a key driver for us to ensure that we continue supporting the most vulnerable, making the right decisions, in the right timescales.

There have, undoubtedly, been some significant moments on our journey over the last 5 years, including:

- quickly supporting individuals back into front-line work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- ensuring those operating the Homes for Ukraine scheme received DBS checks needed to help decide whether hosts were suitable
- implementing significant changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and filtering rules to further support both safeguarding in the community as well as supporting people into new roles quickly

We have continued to develop our digital transformation capabilities, including the launch of our new online barring referral service which

makes it quicker and easier for people to refer individuals for barring consideration.

We have also launched the initial phase of a new online application service for Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS check applications, which will make it easier for a range of Registered Bodies to access our services. These platforms have been designed with user experience in mind, ensuring that they are intuitive and accessible for customers.

We have also introduced automation into some of our customer service operations, improving both efficiency and quality for our customers. Our online Basic DBS check service was one of the first digital services across government to achieve the coveted ‘great’ standard as defined by the Government Digital Service and continues to develop and improve in response to customer needs

and feedback.

We launched a new outreach service – which in its first 3 years has engaged with almost 50,000 people – to provide employers with tailored advice, training, and support in relation to DBS checks and the barring process, including the statutory requirement for certain organisations to refer people to DBS if someone has harmed, or put at risk, a vulnerable adult or child. There is much more to do in this space and this strategy will reflect our new ambitions.

Our last strategy was also rightly ambitious in developing our staff, as ensuring we have the right people, with the right set of skills and level of understanding, doing the right things, is a key driver of DBS’ success. We have continued to make significant improvements for everyone who works at DBS, including

flexible working options which have enabled us to attract and retain skilled, and dedicated staff and maintain our high-quality customer services standards, to the introduction and development of our very own DBS Academy. The academy ensures that our staff have an increased ability to access learning and development relevant to their role and our wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Making sure we invest in, support, and progress the skills of our staff which in turn best supports our customers and contributes to the safeguarding of those at risk of harm, is a long-term commitment of both the DBS board, and our strategic leadership team (SLT).

### Looking ahead

Our previous strategy was developed to change and embed the foundations on

which we work, and we have achieved the majority of what we set out to achieve by 2025. This new strategy has taken account of many voices, both internally and externally, and has been developed to drive and deliver the further changes needed to transform our services to customers.

Our objectives are clearly laid out in this strategy, and they support our shared vision to make recruitment and employment safer, providing an outstanding quality of service, and ensuring that our people understand the important contributions they make to safeguarding. The achievement of these objectives will involve further change throughout the organisation including the internal reshaping of our Operations teams and introduction of new technology to better support the delivery of our products and services.

Our robust governance model will continue to provide oversight and assurance, and inform key decisions, as well as ensuring that we are compliant with our formal delegations from the Home Office and meet the relevant legal and regulatory obligations.

To fulfil our purpose, achieve our vision, and make the right impacts by 2028, we will focus on the following 5 strategic objectives over the next 3 years:

### **1. Our products and services**

We will provide accessible, timely, and high-quality



# “This new strategy has taken account of many voices, both internally and externally, and has been developed to drive and deliver the further changes needed to transform our services to customers.”

products and services effectively.

### **2. Being visible, trusted, and influential**

We will be a visible, trusted, and influential organisation by delivering additional targeted engagement and achieving measurable results with our stakeholders.

### **3. Delivering through innovative technology**

We will harness innovative technologies to support process developments and increase our ability and agility to respond to future demands, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

### **4. Customer data and insight led**

We will be customer data and insight led, actively seeking, and using data and feedback to drive change at DBS, providing the best possible journey for our customers and influencing change externally.

### **5. Being people-focused**

We will guide and support our people to navigate and adapt to change, ensuring

DBS continues to fulfil its safeguarding role in a sustainable way. This strategy outlines our path forward, detailing what we want to achieve by 2028. There are a number of activities to which we are already committed, working with our partner colleagues, including:

- Working with the Home Office and other government departments to develop actions to respond to relevant recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry to Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

- working with the National Police Chiefs Council and Home Office to identify options for more efficient access by DBS to police information, including supporting the transition from the Police National Computer (PNC) to the Law Enforcement Database (LEDs)

- developing our matching capabilities to reduce the number of applications requiring police input

- implementing new technology to further support

both of our disclosure and barring functions; this will include improving safeguarding by using technology to further streamline processes between DBS and police forces, enabling faster turnaround for DBS checks and a longer-term reduction in costs. We will also use assistive technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), to free up staff to make more timely barring decisions.

We also have a number of additional actions that we will develop over the course of this strategy, including the ongoing improvement of our insights function to develop a wider understanding of the safeguarding landscape, further development of our accessibility of services for customers, offering staff greater flexibility in working practices, advancing our end-to-end digital transformation of services, collaborating wider with partners and stakeholders to increase formal co-delivery and trialling and piloting the use of innovative technology to better support our decision making.

# 3. WIDER CONTEXT FOR DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

**DBS operates within a complex landscape and this strategy has been developed with relevant external drivers in mind to deliver a high quality, efficient, and effective service in the coming years. We have shaped our approach by focusing on safeguarding those at risk of harm, helping to enable individuals to safely enter employment, protecting the rights of individuals to rehabilitation, and delivering value for money services to support economic growth across England and Wales, and in our barring considerations for Northern Ireland.**

**The new government's missions have placed a firm emphasis on crime prevention and protecting those at risk of harm, including a cross-government commitment to halving violence against women and girls over the next 10 years.**

Over the period of this strategy, we will be aligned with these priorities on safeguarding and public protection and will ensure that our initiatives also support wider government objectives.

Economic factors impact DBS in terms of the costs of the service we deliver and the demand for those services, and we will continue to navigate these challenges while ensuring value for money and high-quality service delivery. Investment now, to save in the future will be a key consideration as we deliver our strategic objectives over the next 3 years and improve our technology capability. This strategy also focuses on the importance of insight – using data and feedback to provide the best possible journey for our customers, to drive change within DBS, and to influence change externally.

As DBS works across England and Wales for both disclosure and barring services, as well as providing a barring service in Northern Ireland, this means that we serve a diverse population with varied safeguarding needs. Social factors such as an ageing population, increased awareness of safeguarding issues, and public expectations of transparency and accountability will all continue to influence our service demand and delivery. We aim to address these challenges by improving access to, and the quality of, services.

Technological advancements will continue to transform our operations.



We are embracing digital transformation, with the development of online platforms and automation in processing checks to enhance efficiency and accuracy. Investment in innovative technology is crucial for modernising services and maintaining our high standards of data security and safeguarding. Harnessing this technology will not only support improvements to our operational processes but will also increase our ability to respond to future demands and will improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

We remain committed to sustainable practices, reducing our carbon footprint wherever we can.

DBS operates within a framework of legal and regulatory requirements and that includes work with a range of external organisations including other government departments, regulators, and trade bodies.

Internally, we continue to develop our skilled and talented workforce with a focus on improved staff training and development, and the fostering of a collaborative work environment.

We also aim to streamline service delivery through integrated processes and partnerships with other safeguarding entities and will maintain our high-level governance model to ensure compliance with regulations, delegations, and through the board structure for strategic direction and assurance.



## 4. OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

**Our strategic framework has been streamlined for the next 3 years; the existing purpose and vision remain, but the impacts that we can make by 2028 are now the focus of the strategy. The positive steps taken to achieve the impacts will be considered under our 5 new strategic objectives.**

### **Our Purpose**

Protecting the public by helping employers make safer recruitment and employment decisions, and by barring individuals who pose a risk to vulnerable people.

### **Our Vision**

We will make recruitment and employment safer, by being a visible, trusted, and influential organisation. We will provide an outstanding quality of service to all of our customers and partners. Our people will understand the important contributions they make to safeguarding and feel proud to work within an inclusive and increasingly diverse organisation.

### **Our strategic impacts by 2028**

Everything that we do between now and 2028 will be to achieve our strategic impacts; all activity to fulfil that achievement will be undertaken to deliver positive difference

in safeguarding, improved quality in our services, optimised value for money, sustainability, and improved diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing.

We will contribute to lowering the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, organisations, and wider society. We will help enable individuals to safely enter employment and protect the right to rehabilitation.

We will contribute to economic growth by providing value for money services which support employers to make effective and efficient recruitment and employment decisions.

### **Our strategic objectives**

Following consultation with both staff and partners, we have developed 5 key strategic objectives (SOs) to enable us to achieve all that we want to by 2028.

These reflect elements of the previous strategy but have been reframed and updated to drive further change over the next 3 years.

### **SO1: Our products and services**

We will provide accessible, timely, and high-quality products and services effectively.

### **SO2: Being visible, trusted, and influential**

We will be a more visible, trusted, and influential organisation by delivering our services effectively and achieving measurable results with our stakeholders.

### **SO3: Delivering through**



### **innovative technology**

We will harness innovative technologies to support process developments and increase our ability and agility to respond to future demands, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

### **SO4: Customer data and insight led**

We will be customer and insight led, actively seeking, and using data and feedback to provide the best possible journey for our customers, drive change at DBS and influence change externally.

### **SO5: Being people-focused**

We will guide and support our people to navigate and adapt to change, ensuring DBS continues to fulfil its safeguarding role in a sustainable way.

Detailed within the relevant section, each strategic objective will outline what it means and what difference will be made in each year of the strategy. Also detailing how these in turn support the achievement of our strategic impacts.

Our strategic framework is set out in a visual overleaf to show the golden thread from daily activity to the delivery of purpose and vision through achievement of our strategic impacts.



### VISION

We will make recruitment and employment safer, by being visible, trusted and influential organisation. We will provide an outstanding quality of service to all of our customers and partners. Our people will understand the important contributions they make to safeguarding.

### PURPOSE

Protecting the public by helping employers make safer recruitment and employment decisions, and by barring individuals who pose a risk to vulnerable people.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

We will provide accessible, timely, high-quality products and services effectively.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

We will be a visible, trusted, and influential organisation by delivering our services effectively and achieving measurable results with our stakeholders.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

We will harness innovative technologies to support process developments and increase our ability and agility to respond to future demands, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:

We will be customer and insight led, actively seeking, and using data and feedback to provide the best possible journey for our customers, drive change at DBS and influence change externally.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:

We will guide and support our people to navigate and adapt to change, ensuring DBS continues to fulfil its safeguarding role in a sustainable way.

### IMPACTS BY 2028

By 2028 we will contribute to lowering the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, organisations and wider society. We will enable individuals to safely enter employment and help to protect the right to rehabilitation. By 2028 we will contribute to economic growth by providing value for money services which support employers to make effective and efficient recruitment and employment decisions.

Enablers and Drivers

Processes

People

Workplaces

Technology

Underpinning Focus

Safeguarding

Quality

Value for Money

Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing

Sustainability

#### Encompassed by DBS values:

We work together - We act with integrity - We pursue excellence - We embrace Diversity and Inclusion

# 5. OUR VALUES, BEHAVIOURS, AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Our values and behaviours remain at the core of what we do. However, we have enhanced our commitment to further improve diversity and inclusion in our work by developing specific equality objectives.

## We Pursue Excellence

We challenge ourselves to be creative and explore new ways of working so that we can provide the best possible service to our customers.

We always seek to produce our best quality work, consistently and accurately.

## We Work Together

We collaborate, we actively listen, learn, and share information with our colleagues throughout DBS and with external partners.

We respect and value everyone, and we recognise and appreciate each other's efforts. We are transparent, and we communicate clearly, openly, and with transparency in all of our interactions at work.

## We Act with Integrity

We are accountable, we take responsibility for our actions and decisions, and follow through on our promises. We make sure that we treat all of our colleagues fairly.

We behave with professionalism, seeking to do the right thing.

We are customer-focused, putting the needs of our customers first in all of our actions at work, making sure that we deliver the best possible service for them.

## We Embrace Diversity and Inclusion

Over the next three years, our specific equality objectives are for DBS to:

- be responsive to evolving staff and customer needs and expectations in the decisions that we take and



the products and services we offer as well as supporting and encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion learning for staff

- improve understanding of staff and customers from diverse backgrounds through engagement and data capture opportunities, to enable the active development of policy and service changes, and track impact

- be an instinctively inclusive workplace, in line with our '5 Is of Inclusion' model set out in section 6, ensuring that individual staff differences and experiences are recognised, valued, and celebrated as well as improving customer service

- continue to be compliant with our equality, diversity, and inclusion-related legal obligations and be proactive in creating a wholly inclusive culture, both internally and with our stakeholders

# 6. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT DBS

Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are core foundations for driving forward innovation, collaboration, and organisational success.



By fostering an environment that values individual differences and ensures fair treatment, we can unlock the full potential of our staff and better support our customers. We have worked hard in this area and continue our commitment to further improve our EDI delivery with our '5 Is of Inclusion' model throughout the period of this next 3-year strategy.

Diversity brings together individuals from various background, cultures, and experiences which enhances problem solving and creativity. In further developing our diversity of thought, we will generate innovative ideas and solutions that really reflect our broad and wide customer base in both our disclosure and barring functions.

With an instinctively inclusive culture, we will seek to ensure that every member of staff feels valued and included in our decision-making processes, and we will make sure that our staff and customers are seen and heard during development of and improvements to our products and services. Our SLT members are 'inclusion ambassadors', supporting inclusion across DBS with specific characteristic champions sitting within our associate director colleagues. This approach ensures that inclusion is embedded into DBS with leadership inspiring inclusion in all that they do. This is a cornerstone of our EDI delivery.

Our '5 Is of Inclusion' model is built on the understanding that every member of staff has a vital role in developing, sustaining, and celebrating EDI in DBS. The 5 Is are Inspiring Inclusion, Influencing Inclusion, Improving Inclusion, Informing Inclusion, and Instinctively Inclusive:

- By Inspiring Inclusion, every member of staff can support our initiatives, and make a positive difference for a colleague or customer
- In Influencing Inclusion, our leaders and team members can be empowered to advocate for inclusive practice and policy – putting forward ideas to be turned into action to drive positive change for both staff and customers
- By being committed to Improving Inclusion, we can ensure that we are continuously reviewing and improving EDI delivery; actively incorporating feedback to evolve policies and practices for our diverse workforce and customer base
- Through Informing Inclusion, we are cultivating transparency and open communication; encouraging

teams to have the more 'difficult' conversations and learning from lived experiences to enhance our inclusive culture

- Developing a truly Instinctively Inclusive culture is to instil a natural grasp and appreciation of diversity; embedding inclusive behaviour across the organisation utilising a colleague led support structure

Throughout this next strategy, we will be exploring opportunities for accessibility and demographic/EDI data to be captured throughout the customer journey to drive service improvements. This increases the opportunity for staff learning and for them to demonstrate their understanding and implementation of our inclusion model alongside our collective legal responsibilities

and proactive improvements to the accessibility of our services. We will ensure that as we further develop our digital end-to-end transformation of services, accessibility needs are retained with options provided for customers.

Our commitment to EDI at DBS is evident in the fact that it has been embedded throughout the strategy as an 'underpinning focus'. Every decision and activity will be considered through an EDI lens. We have certain legal obligations – such as our Public Sector Equality Duty – to meet when we think of EDI at DBS, but our commitment and vision is wider than compliance.

Measuring our EDI efforts will be undertaken through a combination of staff feedback, both formally and informally including through our Employee Engagement survey and in-year spot surveys,

through the tracking of our relevant key performance indicators, completion of training, completion of annual EDI-related activities to meet our objectives and through internal mechanisms such as our People Steering Group and Audit & Risk Committee reporting.

EDI at DBS really is about every member of staff, and every customer. We are dedicated to building an inclusive culture, improving policies and practices where they need it, gaining external assurances on any changes to products and services to ensure they work for those who need them, and becoming a leading voice of good practice in relation to EDI activities and service provision across the public sector by 2028.

PHOTOGRAPHY  
GETTY IMAGES



# 7. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

**We will provide accessible, timely, and high-quality products and services effectively.**

Our goal is to offer products and services that are easy for everyone to access and engage with, alongside meeting high quality standards. We are committed to ensuring that these are delivered promptly and efficiently, without unnecessary delays to support our organisational impacts on contributing to the reduction of the risk of harm and supporting economic growth.

Delivery of this strategic objective will see the following differences made in our products and services each year to ensure that by 2028, we will be responsive to customer needs and expectations through the end-to-end digital transformation of services. We will improve its efficiency and effectiveness in its disclosure operations and further support safer recruitment and employment in the safeguarding landscape through improved knowledge, understanding, and access to our barring functions. Accessibility of service will not be constrained to our EDI obligations but will ensure that everyone who needs to know about DBS and the role we play in safeguarding has the right information to hand and can access our services in a way that suits them.

### Year 1:

- Accessibility of services will be further improved in line with legislative requirements and customer needs

- Collaboration opportunities in relation to police information, and options for more efficient access to police intelligence, will be explored with the Home Office and National Police Chiefs Council; further development of our matching capability will also be delivered, as set out in SO3.1

- Identity (ID) validation processes will be developed in line with Department for Science, Innovation and Technology legislation



### Year 2:

- Registered Bodies and Responsible Organisations will be able to achieve DBS accreditation for their services within the regime

- Opportunities to work with government departments to reduce the number of conflicted applications will be explored

### Year 3:

- Applicants will be able to prove their identity more easily through digital resources and reducing reliance on manual ID verification

- We will offer faster service delivery and will enhance the effectiveness of operational and support processes assisted by innovative technology

- We will be responsive to customer needs and expectations through the end-to-end digital transformation of services; including improved ability to interact directly with us, with relevant accessibility requirements met

- Our technology systems will be modernised through the completion of the delivery of our next generation estate

### Positively influencing our strategic impacts

We will contribute to lowering the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, organisations, and wider society. We will help enable individuals to safely enter employment and protect the right to rehabilitation.

The work being carried out

under this strategic objective will positively influence our strategic impacts by making sure that employers have the information they need on DBS checks to make risk assessments when recruiting or continuing to employ staff and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults. We will also continue to ensure that high-quality decisions are made when we consider whether someone is a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults and should be barred from certain roles.

End-to-end digital transformation of services will offer customer-centric products and services with information that is as accurate and up to date as possible.

We will contribute to economic growth by providing value for money services which support employers to make effective and efficient recruitment and employment decisions.

Our services will be streamlined to ensure speedier pre-employment checks and more timely barring decisions being made. This will mean employers are able to make timely decisions about who they bring into, or continue to employ within, their workforce. We will continue to improve the efficiency and value for money we provide to the public and to employers and will seek to reduce our fees.

PHOTOGRAPHY  
GETTY IMAGES





# 8. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: BEING VISIBLE, TRUSTED, AND INFLUENTIAL

**We will be a visible, trusted, and influential organisation by delivering our services effectively and achieving measurable results with our stakeholders.**

**W**e aim to support delivery of our services through being a visible, trusted, and influential organisation. We will work closely with a range of partners to achieve meaningful, measurable outcomes that make a positive contribution to safeguarding and help contribute to the reduction of harm, and to supporting economic growth.

Delivery of this strategic objective will see the following differences made in our products and services each year to ensure that by 2028, we will continue to work to improve employer understanding of the scope of regulated activity. We will increase collaboration with external stakeholders and be recognised as a trusted educator in the safeguarding sphere. We will create and deliver a pilot programme to support stakeholders, inspectorates, and regulators with the safer recruitment and employment process.

### Year 1:

- We will increase collaboration with external stakeholders and be recognised as a trusted educator in safeguarding
- We will develop a refreshed outreach support programme to ensure consistency in the approach, guidance, and advice we give to partners that work with those protected by the work we do

### Year 2:

- Those organisations with a mandatory duty to refer individuals to us for barring considerations will better understand and implement their responsibilities
- We will develop co-delivery of messaging with partners on the provision of international criminal record information
- Through our outreach efforts, employers will have an increased understanding of the rehabilitation periods



and how these relate to safer recruitment and employment decisions

### Year 3:

- We will develop a pilot working group with key partners to trial enhanced outreach support programme supporting Inspectorates and regulators, including e-learning provision
- We will be a leading voice of good practice for EDI activities and service provision, with opportunities to identify and test changes to products and services through an external EDI advisory panel
- We will explore with Home Office colleagues potential revisions to the current funding model to ensure sustainability and value for money
- We will have optimised access to relevant criminal records and police information, secured efficiencies, and improved effectiveness in the police disclosure unit model

### Positively influencing our strategic impacts

We will contribute to lowering the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, organisations, and wider society. We will help to enable individuals to safely enter employment and protect the right to rehabilitation.

By focusing our efforts in supporting our partners and stakeholders to better understand and implement the duty to refer for barring

framework, we will directly contribute to lowering the risk of harm.

Through our outreach efforts, and working with employers to better understand rehabilitation periods will ensure a greater understanding of how these relate to safer recruitment and employment decision; seeking to ensure that individuals are able to safely enter employment and right to rehabilitation is protected.

We will contribute to economic growth by providing value for money services which support employers to make effective and efficient recruitment and employment decisions.

More efficient processes and comprehensive referrals received will ensure our services will more quickly support employers to make efficient and efficient recruitment and employment decisions.

Being visible, trusted, and influential in the safeguarding and rehabilitation landscape will increase stakeholders understanding of the work we do and appropriately optimise access to our products; minimising risk for employing organisations whilst strengthening safeguarding.





## 9. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: DELIVERING THROUGH INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

**We will harness innovative technologies to support process developments and increase our ability and agility to respond to future demands, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our services.**

**W**e will further pilot and use innovative technology – including artificial intelligence (AI) – to streamline and enhance our processes, developing solutions to repetitive tasks and supporting operational decision-making. This will make us quicker and better equipped to respond to customer feedback and other future changes or challenges. Our capability and productivity will increase, which will contribute to our strategic impacts.

Delivery of this strategic objective will see the following differences made in our ability to deliver through innovative technology each year to ensure that we will offer improved service delivery. For example, by March 2028, we will have started the rollout of the revised Update Service which will provide ‘push’ notifications to employers of any relevant changes to DBS-held information on an individual employee or volunteer.

### **Year 1:**

- We will reduce the number of police referrals made through an increase in the quality of the police matching algorithm

- Innovative technology inputs, including piloting use of artificial intelligence to support operational and support processes, will be trialled to support operational and support processes

### **Year 2:**

- Innovative technology will routinely assist our operational and support services processes

- Options to reduce the number of police referrals required will be explored

- Implemented modernised technology systems will provide greater resilience and quickly support change requirements

### **Year 3:**

- We will offer faster service delivery and will enhance the effectiveness of operational and support processes



### **Positively influencing our strategic impacts**

We will contribute to lowering the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, organisations, and wider society. We will help to enable individuals safely enter employment and protect the right to rehabilitation.

Innovative technology will support our operational processes for disclosure and provide support with administrative and non-decision-making tasks in our barring function so that timely decisions can be made.

We will contribute to economic growth by providing value for money services which support employers to make effective and efficient recruitment and employment decisions.

The implementation of updated systems will ensure resilience in the way we operate as well as offering the opportunity for future changes to be made. This could be in response to customer feedback or to other external drivers such as a further pandemic or similar crisis, or to implement legislative changes.





# 10. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: CUSTOMER DATA AND INSIGHT LED

**We will be customer and insight led, actively seeking and using data and feedback to provide the best possible journey for our customers, drive change at DBS and influence change externally.**

We will develop responsive techniques, including optimising use of our Legacy Technology Estate Replacement programme, to capture, collate, and develop data and feedback, both internally and externally. The resulting insight will support informed changes which better meet the needs of our customers, enabling us to better target our outreach activities, and add value to the work of external partners in a responsive, agile manner leading to a measurable difference to safeguarding and efficiency.

Delivery of this strategic objective will see the following differences made in each year to ensure that by 2028, we will be customer, beneficiary and insight led as an organisation. We will be a trusted source of relevant safeguarding insights in relation to our products and services and will use these insights to work collaboratively with others to contribute to the reduction of the risk of harm.

### Year 1:

- We will better tailor our externally facing advice and guidance, with accessibility in mind, drawing on feedback from staff and customers

- We will identify further opportunities to make better use of the data we have, and new opportunities to seek customer and stakeholder feedback

### Year 2:

- We will improve our understanding of staff and customers from diverse backgrounds through data capture opportunities to enable the active development of policy and service changes, and track impact

- Our sector engagement will be underpinned and driven by enhanced use of DBS-held data and use of open source and external data

- Insight and trend analysis will inform future development of our products and services

- We will support wider



contextual understanding of safeguarding threat, harm, and risk through the development of an annual Insights programme to further support safeguarding in key sectors

### Year 3:

- We will be a trusted source of relevant safeguarding Insight and will develop this to provide increased collaboration opportunities with stakeholder organisations

- We will develop and deliver more customer-centric processes and services based on customer feedback and data insight

### Positively influencing our strategic impacts

We will contribute to lowering the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, organisations, and wider society. We will help enable individuals to safely enter employment and protect the right to rehabilitation.

We will contribute to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, help enable individuals to safely enter employment, and protect the right to rehabilitation by providing guidance that gives employers the confidence to manage certificate information correctly and appropriately with enhanced awareness of DBS products across different sectors. We will use insight to build awareness in key sectors of the duty to refer individuals for barring.

We will contribute to economic growth by

providing value for money services which support employers to make effective and efficient recruitment and employment decisions.

Increased understanding of customer feedback will lead to improved services and support for individuals and employers, so that appropriate and timely DBS check applications and recruitment decisions can be made. This will contribute to economic growth by ensuring individuals can gain or return to work quickly. The data and insight captured will ensure we continue to offer value for money services with application processes delivered in a customer-centric manner with accessibility in mind. The work under this strategic objective will provide more evidence-based insight to better target external engagement with employers and ensure they have the information they need to obtain optimum value from our services.





# 11. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: BEING PEOPLE-FOCUSED

**We will guide and support our people to navigate and adapt to change, ensuring DBS continues to fulfil its safeguarding role in a sustainable way.**

As we navigate significant organisational change throughout this strategy, we will support our people with empathy and transparency, focusing on building both individual and organisational resilience. We recognise that change brings challenges and opportunities, which we must seize. We are committed to providing the training, development, and support our people need to provide the best possible service for our customers. The changes will include transformation of the way our operational services (issuing DBS certificates and making barring decisions) are delivered.

Delivery of this strategic objective will see the following differences made in each year to ensure that by 2028 we foster a modern, inclusive workforce that reflects those we serve by adapting to change, offering flexible employment options, and attracting and retaining the right people to sustainably fulfil our safeguarding mission.

### Year 1:

- Staff will have greater flexibility with their working options with home-based or hybrid contracts being offered as part of our employment package

- We will continue to improve and invest in our academy (learning and development) offering

- Our workforce model and practices will be developed to ensure diversity is embraced, and that our support systems are reviewed and updated, and we are working towards our Legacy Technology Estate Replacement technology support model

- We will drive efficiencies through process re-engineering in our operational services, streamlining tasks and activities to remove any duplication following the merger of the two operational directorates

### Year 2:

- Being 'instinctively inclusive' will be embedded in all that we do, ensuring the recognition and value of individual staff differences



and experiences is celebrated as well as improving customer service

- Our staff will work to their highest potential through further development of and investment in staff learning and shadowing to offer relevant experience, accreditation, and qualifications

- Certainty on future office space will be available for staff to best determine their working arrangements

### Year 3:

- Our workforce model and use of innovative technology will be fully aligned with a flexible approach which means we can respond swiftly to external changes

- We will become a leading voice on good practice in EDI across the public sector

### Positively influencing our strategic impacts

We will contribute to lowering the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, organisations, and wider society. We will help enable individuals to safely enter employment and protect the right to rehabilitation.

We will contribute to lowering the risk of harm by providing accessible and accurate training, development, and support for staff. This will help to ensure that applicants and employers complete the appropriate DBS checks and that these are as accurate as possible, and that we make barring decisions to the

highest possible standard.

We will contribute to economic growth by providing value for money services which support employers to make effective and efficient recruitment and employment decisions.

Supporting and developing our people will help to attract and retain a talented and motivated workforce which can implement changes, streamline processes, and provide value for money across products and services.



# 12. SUPPORTING OUR STRATEGY

## Governance

The DBS board will continue to oversee the delivery of this strategy and will work closely with the Home Office in doing so. The board continues with its enhanced committee structure, with the ongoing monitoring of activity through its Change Management and People committees. The Quality, Finance & Performance Committee will now meet bi-monthly to assure the strategy's progress with the Audit and Risk, and Remuneration committees meeting quarterly to provide assurance on risk.

## Business planning and change management

DBS develops an annual business plan each year, along with a regularly updated Change and Transformation plan and accompanying change and transformation framework. These collectively drive the implementation of the strategy and are assured through the governance arrangements set out above.

## Increased connectivity and engagement

In developing this strategy, we have talked to and sought ideas from staff across DBS and from our stakeholders and partners, as well as using open-source data to provide insights into future trends.

This connectivity with staff and stakeholders was possible because of the work we have done to build relationships internally and externally over the last few years. This strategy will continue to build on both our internal and external engagement; we have the Employee Forum, the internal EDI advisory groups, and several groups within DBS who also contribute to the ongoing delivery of this strategy. There are a number of ambitions within this strategy to develop even stronger links with external partners and stakeholders and this will only strengthen the inclusion of their voices as we further shape the delivery of this strategy over the next three years.

## Finance and funding

We are funded by the fees generated from our disclosure products (DBS checks). Our income is dependent upon the volumes of applications for DBS checks and Update Service



subscriptions received each year. Fees for Basic, Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS checks, and the Update Service, allow volunteer applications to be processed free-of-charge. The fee income generated from checks also funds our barring operations.

We will continue to set a budget within each annual business plan, which will include the costs for delivery of this strategy. Over the period of the strategy, we will regularly review (and where possible, reduce) our fees to ensure that our costs are aligned to, and that we are adhering to the principles of, Managing Public Money, as well as the additional scrutiny we will apply with our value for money framework.

## Reporting on delivery

DBS has a number of arrangements by which we plan, deliver, measure, report,

and review what we aim to achieve. Measurement is multi-layered with both an operational (operations) organisational and strategic focus, with our approach to operations and organisational measurement mature and embedded.

Our approach to impacts and outcomes measurement is evolving, and we have made some progress with measures here through the value for money workstream in 2024. We have a clear idea of where we want to be with demonstrating our impact and will continue to mature our approach, with a shift towards a more outcome-based measurement framework in the first two years of the strategy.

The strategy will be delivered through an annual business plan; each business plan will set out the detail of activity to be undertaken to achieve the intention of the

strategy.

In each year's business plan, the board will agree a set of targets and measures to monitor our progress in delivering the strategy. We will report our progress through our annual report and accounts. Both our publications will be available through our website.

## Conclusion

This new strategy sets out our realistic ambitions for achievements over the next three years. It rightly calls out the technological changes we wish to make over the coming years to ensure that we can continue to provide our products and services to the highest quality in the most efficient way, supporting quicker decision making.

It reaffirms our purpose and vision, but for the first time details the impacts we want to make and influence by 2028. The world continues

to change at pace, and we want to make sure that we are at the forefront of those changes, where possible anticipating them coming and being able to respond quickly when needed.

Above all, we want to see our strategic impacts realised so that we can make a measurable difference to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, contribute to rehabilitation of offenders, and provide value for money services that play a part in economic growth.

The next 3 years will be challenging, but positively so, to make the difference we want to make with our staff who will be absolutely critical to the success of the delivery of this strategy, working alongside our partners, stakeholders, and the public.

# 13. OUR STRATEGY ON A PAGE

GRAPHICS BY DBS COMMUNICATIONS



## WHY ARE WE HERE?

Protecting the public by helping employers make safer recruitment and employment decisions, and by barring individuals who pose a risk to vulnerable people.

## HOW WE WILL DO IT

- We will provide accessible, timely, high-quality products and services effectively
- We will be a visible, trusted, and influential organisation by delivering our services effectively and achieving measurable results with our stakeholders
- We will harness innovative technologies to support process developments and increase our ability and agility to respond to future demands, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our services
- We will be customer and insight led, actively seeking, and using data and feedback to drive change at DBS and influence change externally
- We will guide and support our people to navigate and adapt to change, ensuring DBS continues to fulfil its safeguarding role in a sustainable way

## OUR FOCUS IN EVERYTHING WE DO:

- Safeguarding
- Value for Money
- Quality
- Sustainability
- Diversity, Inclusion, and Wellbeing

## BY 2028, OUR IMPACTS WILL BE:

- Contributing to lowering the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, organisations and wider society
- We will help enable individuals to safely enter employment and protect the right to rehabilitation
- Contributing to economic growth by providing value for money services which support employers to make effective and efficient recruitment and employment decisions

## OUR ENABLERS AND DRIVERS, WHICH WE WILL INVEST IN, ARE:

- **Support Processes** - proactive, responsive support services which are strategically aligned
- **Our People** - provide training and development to give our staff the leadership, tools, skills and knowledge they need
- **Our Technology** - delivering agile, digitally enabled operations with efficient, reliable systems and processes
- **Our Workplaces** - ensuring we offer the most productive and efficient options to allow staff to be their most effective