



Disclosure &  
Barring Service

# DBS BUSINESS PLAN 2025-26

MAKING RECRUITMENT AND  
EMPLOYMENT SAFER





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# JOINT INTRODUCTION FROM THE DBS CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This business plan signifies the start of our new strategy, which is being published at the same time and should be read alongside this plan. Over the next 12 months, we are embarking on delivering the ambitions detailed within our 2025-28 strategy to build the foundation of change that is required to achieve the 'strategic impacts' we have set ourselves.

These impacts show the real and tangible difference that we can make over the next 3 years and will ensure that our efforts are focused on doing all that we can to:

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

To fully show our positive influence on these impacts will take the full period of the strategy, but measurable activity and steps taken each year will cumulatively ensure that we will achieve all that we are setting out to do for those at risk of harm, while also enabling safer recruitment and employment, and supporting economic growth in key protective sectors.

This business plan outlines our approach for the first year of this strategic journey, detailing the resources and actions we will take to achieve these goals.

We have set out new activities to be undertaken, as well as continuing to deliver and embed some of the changes we have already committed to. These include:



Dr Gillian Fairfield,  
DBS Chairman



Mr Eric Robinson,  
Chief Executive







**“We must take the opportunity to look back at the substantial progress that we have made over recent years at DBS. Our work, and the transformations we have already undertaken to improve our processes, has undoubtedly strengthened safeguarding in the workplace, both at the point of recruitment and throughout the employment of an individual.”**

- 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)

- further 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

Some of the activity included within this plan is preparatory work to align working practices and technology which will equip us to deliver greater differences in years 2 and 3 of the strategy.

As we focus on a new year, and a new strategy, we must take the opportunity to look back at the substantial progress that we have made

over recent years at DBS. Our work, and the transformations we have already undertaken to improve our processes, has undoubtedly strengthened safeguarding in the workplace, both at the point of recruitment and throughout the employment of an individual. We now issue a record number of DBS certificates; with over 7.4million certificates being issued in 2023-24, and our engagement with stakeholders has continued to increase which has supported confidence in both the function of, and processes for, barring. We have seen increases in the number of barring referrals received which has resulted in a record number of people of the Barred Lists. It also means that so many more people at risk of harm are now protected from that harm and



will continue to be. We have worked tirelessly to ensure that quality is central to all of the work that we do, and that our decisions are robust but fair. In this last year, we also achieved re-accreditation with the Customer Service Excellence standards, showing our ongoing commitment to ensuring our customers experience high-quality, accurate, and efficient services. This is now the 6th year in a row that we have received this accreditation and is a continued testament to the calibre of our people, and the dedication they have for the roles that they do to support others.

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 private beta test-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 (RBs) 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 our new strategy reflects our new ambitions of support that we can offer – some of which is detailed within the actions of this business plan. We have a unique safeguarding role through our disclosure and barring functions. What we do, day in and day out, provides significant protection to the public and support to employers. This business plan, directed by the DBS board through the strategy, will be delivered by a dedicated team of staff working across many functions. Without their enthusiasm and passion to do the right thing for everyone who needs our services, we would not, and could not, achieve what we have, and what we are setting out to do. We continue to thank our staff and key partners in supporting us to deliver a strong, fair, and effective disclosure and barring service.





# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

DBS provides disclosure and barring functions on behalf of government. This includes DBS checks for England, Wales, Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man, and barring functions for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We conduct this work from bases in Darlington and Liverpool, with employees working through hybrid arrangements, both in these areas and across the UK.

DBS was created under the provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. We are a non-departmental public body (NDPB) accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State for the Home Office. We provide an important service, helping to safeguard and protect people in our society and protecting the rights of individuals. We do this by providing relevant information and, where necessary, making barring decisions to help employers make safer recruitment and employment decisions.



DBS issues 4 levels of certificates of criminal records, known as DBS certificates, and we operate a system of updating certificates through our Update Service.

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

Not only have our DBS check processing numbers and barring referrals increased over the last 5 years, but so too has the quality of our services and DBS has made significant strides in improving our processes and services. This has been a key driver for us to ensure that we make the right decisions in the right timescales to support the most vulnerable.

#### 4.1 Basic DBS check

A Basic DBS check is available for any position or purpose. A Basic certificate will contain details of convictions and conditional cautions that are considered to be unspent by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

**4.2 Standard DBS check**  
Standard DBS certificates

show relevant convictions and cautions held on the Police National Computer (PNC), subject to filtering and rehabilitation rules.

#### 4.3 Enhanced DBS check

An Enhanced DBS check is available to anyone involved in work with vulnerable groups, and other positions involving a high degree of trust. Enhanced certificates contain the same information as a Standard certificate, with the addition of relevant local police force information that a Chief Constable feels ought to be included.

#### 4.4 Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS check

An Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS certificate contains the same information as an Enhanced DBS certificate but includes details of whether the

individual is included on one or both of the Barred Lists. These lists include individuals barred from working with children and vulnerable groups where the role is in regulated activity.

#### 4.5 Barring

We make considered decisions about whether an individual should be barred from engaging in regulated activity with children and/or adults and maintain the Children's and Adults' Barred Lists. This can be because they have been referred to us, because relevant offences are being disclosed on a check, or because an individual has been convicted of an offence that should result in an automatic bar. We also make decisions as to whether it is appropriate to remove a person from a Barred List.



# OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Through our new strategy, we have streamlined our strategic framework for the next 3 years. We maintain our existing purpose and vision but the impacts that we can make by 2028 are now the focus of the strategy and therefore the focus of each year of delivery through the respective business plans. The positive action taken to achieve the impacts will be considered under the 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.

## 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.

This business plan focuses on what we can achieve by March 2026, to deliver against our strategic impacts by the end of the strategy.

- 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 to 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

Our new strategy details 5 key strategic objectives (SOs) which will guide our activity between 2025 and 2028. Activities for 2025-26 have been aligned against these strategic objectives:

### SO1: Our products and services

We will provide accessible, timely, 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 under each strategic objective in our 'In-year activity' section, the activity we will undertake by March 2026 has been developed to drive us towards positively influence our impacts and elevating DBS' role in safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm.





# UNDERPINNING FOCUS FOR ACTIVITY CONSIDERATION

In developing the activity under each strategic objective, and for all other activity that we will undertake throughout the year, we have, and will, ensure that the following focused areas of consideration underpin all decisions. In doing so, we will not only meet legislative requirements but will achieve optimised delivery and support our staff and customers, fulfilling our duties to the best of our abilities.

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is our core principle and underpins every aspect of our operations. It is central to our efforts to prevent harm through accurate, timely, and high-quality DBS checks to efficient and effective decision making in our barring functions. All activity that we undertake as an organisation must positively contribute to safeguarding.

## Quality

Focusing on quality ensures the integrity, accuracy, and reliability of all of our processes and outcomes. Our commitment to quality ensures our ability to provide consistent and fair assessments and means that we can deliver prompt and efficient application processing. The balance between speed and thoroughness contributes to safeguarding those at risk of harm effectively and maintains public and employer trust in our functions.

## Value for money

In considering value for money in all that we do, we ensure our resources are used efficiently to deliver optimal benefits, while also working to maintain affordability for applicants and employers, including large sections of the public sector such as the National Health Service. Delivering value for money services is not only focused on financial savings but seeks to ensure that investment in new approaches can be





made where appropriate, and processes can be optimised to realise benefits for staff and customers.

#### **Equality, diversity, and wellbeing**

A constant focus on equality, diversity, and wellbeing enables DBS to maintain and sustain a fair, supportive, inclusive, and trusted framework for customers and staff. It supports our commitment to accessibility of service and removing potential barriers, while also emphasising respect for diversity, incorporating our approach into decision-making and engagement.

#### **Sustainability**

Decision making and activity development must be underpinned by sustainability considerations. This reflects our commitment to minimising our environmental impact, embedding our social responsibilities, and ensuring our long-term operational resilience.

#### **In-year activity**

Our 2025-28 strategy focuses on positively influencing key impacts by March 2028, detailing the differences we want to make each year to both DBS, and to our services for the benefit of our customers, employers, and those we protect – vulnerable groups, including children. This business plan is written in line with that approach. Our 5 strategic objectives are detailed over the next few pages, outlining the differences we want to make in this first year of the new



**“A constant focus on equality, diversity, and wellbeing enables DBS to maintain and sustain a fair, supportive, inclusive, and trusted framework for customers and staff. It supports our commitment to accessibility of service and removing potential barriers, while also emphasising respect for diversity, incorporating our approach into decision-making and engagement. ”**

strategy.

In order to achieve these differences, there are a number of identified actions that we need to undertake throughout the year, and these are also listed below.

Across our 5 strategic objectives, we have identified 31 business plan activities which support the differences we want to make.

#### **Improvement for customers**

During the year, there are a number of activity strands which will contribute to improvements in our service to customers. These are mostly detailed within Strategic Objective 1, Our products and services, but elements such as delivery of our accessibility implementation plan and use of assistive technology to speed up services will also play a key role. Strategic

Objective 4, Customer Data and Insight-led, details our ambition to be led by customer data, and to ensure our services are optimised according to customer need.

Delivery of these activities, particularly objective actions SO1.3 to SO1.7 will offer further opportunity for us to ensure customer feedback and other data we collect about how our services operate are used to drive the development of service improvements.

Alongside these specific activities, our business-as-usual work will see a focus on the customer experience, working across teams and utilising available data effectively to identify improvements to be made.

#### **Governance**

We have strong governance in place through our board,

committees, and Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) to ensure we focus attention on delivering the actions in the plan. All of the detailed business plan actions will be tracked monthly by SLT – through our Strategic Plan Oversight Group (SPOG) – and assurance will be provided through our Quality, Finance, and Performance (QF&P) Committee and the DBS board.

As delivery progresses, we will use our governance processes to make decisions that ensure our actions continue to be appropriate and valid for the delivery of this plan and the wider DBS strategy.





# 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.

By March 2026, we will have made the following differences:

- 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 on SO3.1
- Identity (ID) validation processes will be developed in line with Department for Science, Innovation and Technology legislation

These differences will be made through the below defined business plan activities:

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

- **SO1.1:** Explore and develop a Registered Body (RB) and Responsible Organisation (RO) accreditation process which is approved by SLT and the DBS board
- **SO1.2:** Deliver a comprehensive action plan with defined implementation timescales to refine commercial arrangements with ROs and RBs, supported



by refreshed policies and procedures to achieve compliance against standards

- **SO1.3:** Continue to explore, identify, and implement modern self-service options and appropriate automation to improve customer delivery within Customer Services; including the assisted digital process and exploration of digital contact forms
- **SO1.4:** Work with Home Office and Ministry of Justice to support policy and legislative changes, including any resulting from the IICSA recommendations
- **SO1.5:** Continue delivery of the Legacy Technology Estate Replacement (LTER) programme

Deliver other projects on the DBS technology roadmap, such as building of the integration platform which, combined with the replacement of our existing technology, will comprise the next generation estate

Continue to deliver those projects which are required to maintain the legacy technology estate until the next generation estate is live

- **SO1.6:** Continue the rollout of both our Standard and Enhanced Application Service (SEAS) and Disclosure Online Results Service (DORS) to organisations currently submitting paper applications through private and public beta phases

**Identity validation processes will be**



developed in line with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology legislation and the Department for Work and Pension agreements

- **SO1.7:** Further develop our ID validation process and guidance for customers

- **SO1.8:** Continue to work with government departments to identify improvements to the way we confirm applicants' details

**Collaboration opportunities in relation to police information will be explored with the Home Office and National Police Chiefs Council**

- **SO1.9:** Continue to explore improvements to access to police information including options for more efficient access to police intelligence and the Police National Database

- **SO1.10:** Support the transition from the Police National Computer to the National Law Enforcement Data system project







## 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.

We 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.

By March 2026, we will have made the following differences:

- 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

These differences will be made through the below defined business plan activities:

**We will increase collaboration with external stakeholders and be recognised as a trusted educator in safeguarding**

- **SO2.1:** Provide technical advice to government departments about how legislation implemented by DBS is operating, including feedback from DBS customers and partners
- **SO2.2:** Implement the DBS



Duty to Refer framework to further strengthen support for employers and regulators with making barring referrals

**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**

• **SO2.3:** Develop a suite of podcasts covering a variety of topics from the services and products we provide to guidance and support to those working in the safeguarding landscape

• **SO2.4:** Work with stakeholders and partners to identify and develop additional learning opportunities in relation to DBS checks and the legal duty to refer

PHOTOGRAPHY  
GETTY IMAGES





## 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.

We 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.

By March 2026, we will have made the following differences:

- 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 AI, will be trialled to support operational and support processes

These differences will be made through the below defined business plan activities:

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

- **SO3.1:** Initial quality changes to the police matching algorithm are delivered

**Innovative technology inputs, including piloting**



**use of AI, will be trialled to support operational and support processes**

- **SO3.2:** Trial the use of AI within our Barring function and within our Human Resources (HR) function

- **SO3.3:** Iterate and deliver improvements using the robotic process automation capability

- **SO3.4:** Automate parts of the organisation that are a priority based on the target operating model

Investigate new and emerging technologies and the solutions they create that can assist the organisation

- **SO3.5:** Implement improved security tooling and services.

PHOTOGRAPHY  
GETTY IMAGES





# 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.

By March 2026, we will have made the following differences:

- 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

These differences will be made through the below defined business plan activities:

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

- **SO4.1:** Provide updated guidance on employers retaining certificate



information, sharing employment decisions and the reasons behind them, and guidance on the recruitment of ex-offenders

- **SO4.2:** Deliver the accessibility review implementation plan

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

- **SO4.3:** Develop an approach for engagement with parents, carers, and beneficiaries of DBS services to increase visibility and trust in DBS and the role we play in safeguarding

- **SO4.4:** Utilise the value for money framework to drive continuous improvement, identifying and implementing measurable improvement opportunities against the core elements of the framework – efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and economy





# 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.**

**A**s 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.

By March 2026, we will have made the following differences:

- 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

These differences will be made through the below defined business plan activities:

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

- **SO5.1:** Implement home-based and hybrid contracts as one of a selection of flexible working options

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

- **SO5.2:** Continued delivery of the DBS Academy ensuring the offer is fit for purpose in supporting the required capability build across DBS, and explore expanding the learning offer to external organisations to support the safeguarding agenda

**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**

- **SO5.3:** All members of staff will have opportunity for learning and will demonstrate their understanding of the



‘5 Is of Inclusion’ equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) model and our collective legal responsibilities for EDI

- **SO5.4:** Embed the Legacy Technology Estate Replacement Technology support model

- **SO5.5:** Ensure HR and Finance systems continue to meet staff requirements, developed as appropriate with wider Home Office changes

- **SO5.6:** Develop and implement future estates strategy delivering through the Future of DBS Estates (FODE) project

**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**

- **SO5.7:** Embed the new Operational Directorate service model including starting to implement a Target Operating Model

- **SO5.8:** Deliver Year 2 of the Business Optimisation programme



PHOTOGRAPHY  
GETTY IMAGES



# OVERVIEW OF OUR BUSINESS PLAN ACTIVITIES OVER THE YEAR

## Strategic Objective 1: Our Products and Services

Difference:	Business Plan Activity:	Completion Date:
Accessibility of services will be further improved in line with legislative requirements and customer needs	<b>SO1.1:</b> Explore and develop a Registered Body (RB) and Responsible Organisation (RO) accreditation process which is approved by SLT and the DBS board	March 2026
	<b>SO1.2:</b> Deliver a comprehensive action plan with defined implementation timescales to refine commercial arrangements with ROs and RBs, supported by refreshed policies and procedures to achieve compliance against standards	March 2026
	<b>SO1.3:</b> Continue to explore, identify, and implement modern self-service options and appropriate automation to improve customer delivery within Customer Services; including the assisted digital process and exploration of digital contact forms	March 2026
	<b>SO1.4:</b> Work with Home Office and Ministry of Justice to support policy and legislative changes, including any resulting from the IICSA recommendations	March 2026
	<b>SO1.5:</b> Continue delivery of the Legacy Technology Estate Replacement (LTER) programme. Deliver other projects on the DBS technology roadmap, such as building of the integration platform which, combined with the replacement of our existing technology, will comprise the next generation estate. Continue to deliver those projects which are required to maintain the legacy technology estate until the next generation estate is live	March 2026
	<b>SO1.6:</b> Continue the rollout of both our Standard and Enhanced Application Service (SEAS) and Disclosure Online Results (DORS) to organisations currently submitting paper applications through private and public beta phases	March 2026
Identity Validation Processes will be developed in line with DSIT legislation and DWP agreements	<b>SO1.7:</b> Further develop our ID validation process and guidance for customers	March 2026
	<b>SO1.8:</b> Continue to work with government departments to identify improvements to the way we confirm applicants' details	March 2026
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	<b>SO1.9:</b> Continue to explore improvements to access to police information including options for more efficient access to police intelligence and the Police National Database	March 2026
	<b>SO1.10:</b> Support the transition from the Police National Computer to Law Enforcement Data System project	March 2026

Difference:	Business Plan Activity:	Completion Date:
DBS will increase collaboration with external stakeholders and be recognised as a trusted educator in safeguarding	<b>SO2.1:</b> Provide technical advice to government departments about how legislation implemented by DBS is operating, including feedback from DBS customers and partners	March 2026
	<b>SO2.2:</b> Implementing the DBS Duty to Refer framework to further strengthen support for employers and regulators with making barring referrals.	March 2026
We will develop a refreshed outreach support programme to ensure consistency in the approach, guidance, and advice of we give to partners that work with those protected by the work we do	<b>SO2.3:</b> Develop a suite of podcasts covering a variety of topics from the services and products we provide to guidance and support to those working in the safeguarding landscape	March 2026
	<b>SO2.4:</b> Work with stakeholders and partners to identify and develop additional learning opportunities in relation to DBS checks and the legal duty to refer	March 2026

## Strategic Objective 2: Being Visible, Trusted and Influential

## Strategic Objective 3: Delivering through Innovative Technology

Difference:	Business Plan Activity:	Completion Date:
We will reduce the number of police referrals made through an increase in the quality of the police matching algorithm	<b>SO3.1:</b> Initial quality changes to the police matching algorithm are delivered	March 2026
	<b>SO3.2:</b> Trial the use of AI within our Barring function and within our Human Resources (HR) function	March 2026
Innovative technology inputs, including piloting use of artificial intelligence to support operational and support processes, will be trialled	<b>SO3.3:</b> Develop a suite of podcasts covering a variety of topics from the services and products we provide to guidance and support to those working in the safeguarding landscape	March 2026
	<b>SO3.4:</b> SO3.4 Automate parts of the organisation that are a priority based on the target operating model  Investigate new and emerging technologies and the solutions they create that can assist the organisation	March 2026
	<b>SO3.5:</b> Implement improved security tooling and services	September 2025

## Strategic Objective 4: Customer Data and Insight Lead

Difference:	Business Plan Activity:	Completion Date:
We will better tailor our externally facing advice and guidance, with accessibility in mind, drawing on feedback from staff and customers.	<b>SO4.1:</b> Provide updated guidance on employers retaining certificate information, sharing employment decisions and the reasons behind them and guidance on the recruitment of ex-offenders	December 2025
	<b>SO4.2:</b> Delivery of the accessibility review implementation plan	March 2026
We will identify further opportunities to make better use of the data we have, and new opportunities to seek customer and stakeholder feedback	<b>SO4.3:</b> Develop an approach for engagement with parents, carers, and beneficiaries of DBS services to increase visibility and trust in DBS and the role we play in safeguarding	March 2026
	<b>SO4.4:</b> Utilise the value for money framework to drive continuous improvement, identifying and implementing measurable improvement opportunities against the core elements of the framework – efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and economy	March 2026

## Strategic Objective 5: Being People-Focused

Difference:	Business Plan Activity:	Completion Date:
Staff will have greater flexibility with their working options with home-based or hybrid contracts being offered as part of our employment package	<b>SO5.1:</b> Implement home-based and hybrid contracts as one of a selection of flexible working options	July 2025
We will continue to improve and invest in our Academy (learning and development) offering	<b>SO5.2:</b> Continued delivery of the DBS Academy ensuring the offer is fit for purpose in supporting the required capability build across DBS, and explore expanding the learning offer to external organisations to support the safeguarding agenda	March 2026
	<b>SO5.3:</b> All members of staff will have opportunity for learning and will demonstrate their understanding of the '5 Is of Inclusion' equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) model and our collective legal responsibilities for EDI	March 2026
Our workforce model and practices will be developed to ensure diversity is embraced; that our support systems are reviewed and updated, and we are working towards our Legacy Technology Estate Replacement Technology Support Model	<b>SO5.4:</b> Embed the Legacy Technology Estate Replacement Technology Support Model	March 2026
	<b>SO5.5:</b> Ensure HR and Finance systems continue to meet staff requirements; developed as appropriate with wider Home Office changes	March 2026
	<b>SO5.5:</b> Ensure HR and Finance systems continue to meet staff requirements; developed as appropriate with wider Home Office changes	March 2026
	<b>SO5.6:</b> Develop and implement future estates strategy delivering through the Future of DBS Estates (FODE) project	March 2026
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	<b>SO5.7:</b> Embed the new Operational Directorate service model including starting to implement a Target Operating Model	March 2026
	<b>SO5.8:</b> Deliver Year 2 of the Business Optimisation Programme	March 2026



# STRATEGIC RISKS TO DELIVERY OF THE PLAN

We identify, assess, manage, and review risk through the process defined by the DBS Risk Management framework.

Risks are held at a strategic, corporate and directorate level. Risks are reviewed on a monthly basis by our Associate Directors Group and SLT, and periodically by board, with the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) providing assurance that risk is being appropriately managed.

Through the development of this plan, there have been no additional risks identified for inclusion. The risks which are assessed and managed are relevant to the delivery of our strategy 2025-28 with the business plan actions designed to mitigate against any materialisation of them. The table shows strategic risks which would adversely impact on delivery of business plan objectives if they materialised.

Strategic Risk	Context	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5
<b>Risk 199:</b> Failure to protect DBS systems for a cyber-attack	Ensuring data and systems are protected using cyber-security measures					
<b>Risk 393:</b> Failure to safeguard	Ensuring we make timely decisions that safeguard the public by assuring quality and managing work effectively					
<b>Risk 456:</b> Failure to attract, retain, and develop talent to ensure we have the capacity to deliver our strategic objectives	Ensuring we can attract, retain and develop staff who produce quality work in support of our strategic objectives					
<b>Risk 530:</b> Failure to respond to a business continuity or disaster recovery	Maintaining appropriate plans to ensure we can respond effectively to a business continuity or disaster recovery event					
<b>Risk 637:</b> Failure of technology systems leading to reduced service	Ensuring systems are stable and enable us to operate our services					
<b>Risk 668:</b> Failure in supply chain performance	Ensuring our suppliers enable us to meet our performance levels					
<b>Risk 669:</b> Failure to comply with statutory obligations	Ensuring data is managed appropriately through adherence to relevant legislation					
<b>Risk 670:</b> Failure to manage financial resources	Ensuring we make use of our budget in accordance with Managing Public Money					
<b>Risk 671:</b> Failure to improve DBS profile	Engaging effectively with our partners to ensure we have a reputation as a highly-valued public organisation that has the trust of stakeholders and customers					
<b>Risk 674:</b> Failure to deliver the strategic objectives from the DBS 2025-28	Ensuring we meet our strategic ambitions to achieve our strategic impacts					
<b>Risk 835:</b> Failure to manage change and transformation	Effectively manage change activity to ensure service continuity for our customers					
<b>Risk 771:</b> Reduced productivity and reputational impact due to local and national industrial action	Ensuring that our ability provide full services is not impacted, which may impede our ability to safeguard					



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance management is one of the controls we use to ensure we are delivering against the strategic objectives in the new 2025-28 strategy, as well as ensuring that we are contributing to the objectives desired by the Home Office and government.

We contribute to the Home Office objective of ‘reducing crime’ and to the target of halving Violence against Women and Girls in ten years. We also contribute to other government priority outcomes, including those for health and social care, employment, education, protecting the public, and economic growth.

We measure our progress using a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets agreed by the DBS board. Our KPIs are grouped into 4 themes: quality, timeliness, value for money, and people.

We have a strong focus on the quality and timeliness of our products and services. These are the issues that customers tell us are important to them and it is these that ensure we are supporting the safeguarding of vulnerable groups including children, as effectively as possible.

As part of our performance management framework, progress towards targets is reviewed monthly by SLT and board, with the QF&P and People committees providing assurance that performance is being managed appropriately. KPIs are supplemented by other measures which operate at a corporate, directorate, service, and team level.

We will continue to strive to achieve all our performance targets in 2025-26. Most of our targets contained within the business plan remain as they were for 2024-25, with a stretch being applied to BP2 (barring quality rate of closures), and BP7 (autobar).

We have improved transparency for the public by providing description labels that describe in plain English what our KPIs mean to our customers and employees, and linked these to our strategic commitments.

**12.1 Quality**

Our quality KPIs support our commitment to providing high quality, reliable, consistent, and accessible services for our customers. Quality is at the heart of everything we do, as outlined in our Safeguarding and Quality charter.

Ref	KPI Measure	Description	Target
BP1	Percentage of criminal and barring information that DBS should place on a certificate is included	Accuracy of all decisions and information issued on a certificate	≥99.98%
BP2	Barring Quality rate of closures (IBO)	Quality of barring decisions (incorrect barring outcomes)	≥99.75%
BP3	Customer experience of those raising a complaint with DBS within the previous 3 months (index measure)	Our customer satisfaction index	75%

**12.2 Timeliness**

Our timeliness KPIs help us to demonstrate our speed of service to the public, ensuring safeguarding decisions can be made at pace by employers and that those individuals who should not be allowed to work with vulnerable groups including children are identified and barred as quickly as possible.

Ref	KPI Measure	Description	Target
BP4	Percentage of Basic applications dispatched within two days	Basic DBS check processing time	≥85%
BP5	Percentage of Standard applications dispatched within three days	Standard DBS check processing time	≥85%
BP6	Percentage of Enhanced applications dispatched within 14 days	Enhanced DBS check processing time	≥80%
BP7	Autobar: Percentage of Barred List inclusion cases completed within 6 months	The speed at which we bar people who are cautioned or convicted of more serious crimes, including time for them to make representations	≥80%





Ref	KPI Measure	Description	Target
BP8	Percentage of proposed Barred List case (excluding autobar) completed within 9 months	The speed at which we complete barring cases (excluding those have been cautioned/convicted)	≥50%

12.3 Finance and value for money

We recognise there is a cost for our services borne by employers and individuals, as we are funded by the fees from our disclosure (DBS check) customers. Our finance and value for money KPIs assist us in demonstrating these commitments to the public.

Ref	KPI Measure	Description	Target
BP9	Percentage efficiencies delivered as a percentage of total spend excluding supplier and police costs, costs of charge and depreciation	Efficiencies delivered as a percentage of DBS spending	≥5%

12.4 People

We are committed to developing a talented, diverse, and inclusive workforce that is engaged in delivering the best possible services to the public.

Our people-related KPIs demonstrate progress against the People commitments in our strategy. We have a range of more detailed people measures, and breakthrough diversity measures, that we use internally.

Ref	KPI Measure	Description	Target
BP10	Employee engagement index	The engagement level of our employees	≥66%
BP11	Percentage of ethnic minority employees as a % of total DBS workforce	The diversity of our employees	≥7%





PHOTOGRAPHY, **GETTY IMAGES**

# FINANCIAL PLAN

The budget sets our estimated costs to deliver our services and business priorities this financial year, reflecting financial estimates of service demand, efficiency, and risk.

The budget reflects the business plan milestones that support the delivery of our strategic objectives. The budget overall is in line with our financial goal to deliver value for money with a fair view of risk and opportunity and is detailed in the table below.

## Summary Budget

DBS	Budget FY25/26 £'m
Income	271.0
Police	64.0
3rd Party	
Operational Costs	14.5
Margin	192.6
Pay Costs	72.9
Professional Fees	5.0
IT Costs	104.5
Estate Costs	3.1
Other Costs	2.5
Depreciation	4.5
Total Admin Costs	192.6
Total Expenditure	271.0
Surplus/(Deficit)	0.0
*SIF Revenue - Pay	1.6
**SIF Revenue - Non Pay	40.8
SIF Revenue	42.4
SIF Capital	1.4

