



DBS checks and your mental health

These pages explain what a DBS check is, and what you can do if you are unhappy with the information the police hold about you. This includes any information about your mental health.

If you want to contact us with any feedback, email contact@mind.org.uk.

- This information applies to England and Wales.
- This information applies to adults. It doesn't apply to children unless specifically stated.

Contents

DBS checks and your mental health.....	1
Quick facts about DBS checks.....	2
What is a DBS check?.....	3
Jobs that require DBS checks.....	3
What is the process for a DBS check?	5
What will show up on a DBS check?	9
What if the information in my DBS check is wrong or irrelevant?	13
What if my job offer is withdrawn because of a DBS check?.....	14
Useful contacts	15

Quick facts about DBS checks

- A DBS check is a way for employers to check your criminal record. It can help them decide whether you are a suitable person to work for them.
- DBS stands for the Disclosure and Barring Service. This is the public agency responsible for processing requests for criminal record checks.
- There are four different types of DBS check: [basic DBS check](#), [standard DBS check](#), [enhanced DBS check](#) and [enhanced DBS with list check](#). The type of DBS check you need will depend on what kind of job you apply for.
- A basic or standard DBS check won't include information about your mental health problem. An enhanced DBS check could include details of any non-conviction information held about you on local police records. But it should only include this if [the police consider it relevant](#). This may include information about your mental health.
- If you are not happy about the information disclosed in your DBS check, you can ask the Disclosure and Barring Service to [review your DBS certificate](#).
- If your job offer is withdrawn because of a DBS check, you may be able to [challenge your DBS check on the grounds of disability discrimination](#).

- This is not a guide to the jobs that require a DBS check. The charity Unlock has [a list of which DBS check you are likely to need for various jobs](#).
- These pages contain general legal information, not legal advice. We recommend you get advice from a specialist legal adviser or solicitor who will help you with your individual situation and needs. See our [useful contacts](#) page for organisations which may be able to help.

What is a DBS check?

A DBS check is a way for employers check your criminal record, to help decide whether you are a suitable person to work for them. This includes deciding whether it is suitable for you to work with children or vulnerable adults.

DBS stands for Disclosure and Barring Service. This is the public body that carries out DBS checks. They used to be carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). So you may still see or hear them called 'CRB checks'.

There are four different types of DBS check. The type of check you need will depend on what kind of job you apply for. The different types of are:

- [Basic DBS check](#)
- [Standard DBS check](#)
- [Enhanced DBS check](#)
- [Enhanced DBS with list check](#)

See our information on [what will show up on a DBS check](#) to find out the difference between each level of check.

Once your check is complete, the DBS will send you a DBS certificate with the results of the check.

Jobs that require DBS checks

- [What types of job require a DBS check?](#)
- [What if I disagree with needing a DBS check?](#)
- [When does a DBS check happen?](#)
- [What if I'm a volunteer?](#)
- [What if I change jobs?](#)

What types of job require a DBS check?

There are lots of type of job that require a DBS check. And employers may require different levels of check for different reasons.

For example, if your job involves regular work with [children](#) or [vulnerable adults](#), you will need to have a [standard](#) or [enhanced DBS check](#). This might need to include a children's and adults' barred list check.

The employer will tell you if you need a DBS check for any job you apply for. If you need one, they will tell you what level of check is required.

For some jobs, a standard or enhanced check will always be required. For example:

- Teachers
- Social workers
- Childminders
- Foster carers
- Medical professionals

Some jobs in particular settings will also always require a DBS check. For example, if you apply for a job in a:

- School
- Children's home
- Hospital

There are also jobs that require a DBS check when you enter the profession. For example:

- Solicitors
- Barristers
- Veterinary surgeons (vets)
- Accountants

An employer can decide whether any job requires a DBS check. So there are lots of jobs that may require a basic DBS check.

But a job must meet certain criteria for an employer to ask for a standard or enhanced DBS check. It is the employer's responsibility to check whether a role is eligible for standard or enhanced checks.

If you are unsure whether you need to get a DBS check for a particular job, you can contact the [Disclosure and Barring Service](#). Employers can use the DBS's [online eligibility checking tool](#) to check whether a role needs a DBS check.

The charity Unlock also has [a list of which DBS check you are likely to need for various jobs](#).

What if I disagree with needing a DBS check?

If an employer has asked you to have a standard or enhanced DBS check but you don't think the job needs one, you can ask the Disclosure and Barring Service to investigate. Unlock has information on [how to challenge an ineligible DBS check](#).

When does a DBS check happen?

A DBS check should only happen once an employer offers you a job.

What if I'm a volunteer?

DBS checks happen for voluntary roles in the same ways as paid roles. The only difference is that it doesn't cost any money to check someone for a voluntary role. For paid roles, your employer will usually pay the cost of the DBS check.

If the voluntary role involves regular unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults, you will need to have a standard or enhanced DBS check.

What if I change jobs?

A DBS check does not expire. But it is only accurate at the date the check is carried out. It is up to your new employer to decide whether to accept a [DBS certificate](#) from a previous job, or ask you to get another DBS check.

What is the process for a DBS check?

- [What is the application process for a basic DBS check?](#)
- [What is the application process for a standard or enhanced DBS check?](#)
- [How long does a DBS check take?](#)
- [How much does a DBS check cost?](#)
- [Can I get any help filling out my application form?](#)

What is the application process for a basic DBS check?

You can apply online for a [basic DBS check](#) by completing an [online application form](#). To complete this form you will need:

- A list of all of your addresses for the last 5 years and the dates you lived there
- Your National Insurance number
- A debit or a credit card
- Your passport
- Your driving licence

You can also apply through a [Responsible Organisation](#). These are organisations approved by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help you submit your basic DBS check, and make sure that it includes all of the correct information. The UK government website has information about [what Responsible Organisations can do to help](#), and has a list of [Responsible Organisations](#).

If you give your consent to your employer, they can also apply for a basic DBS check on your behalf.

What is the application process for a standard or enhanced DBS check?

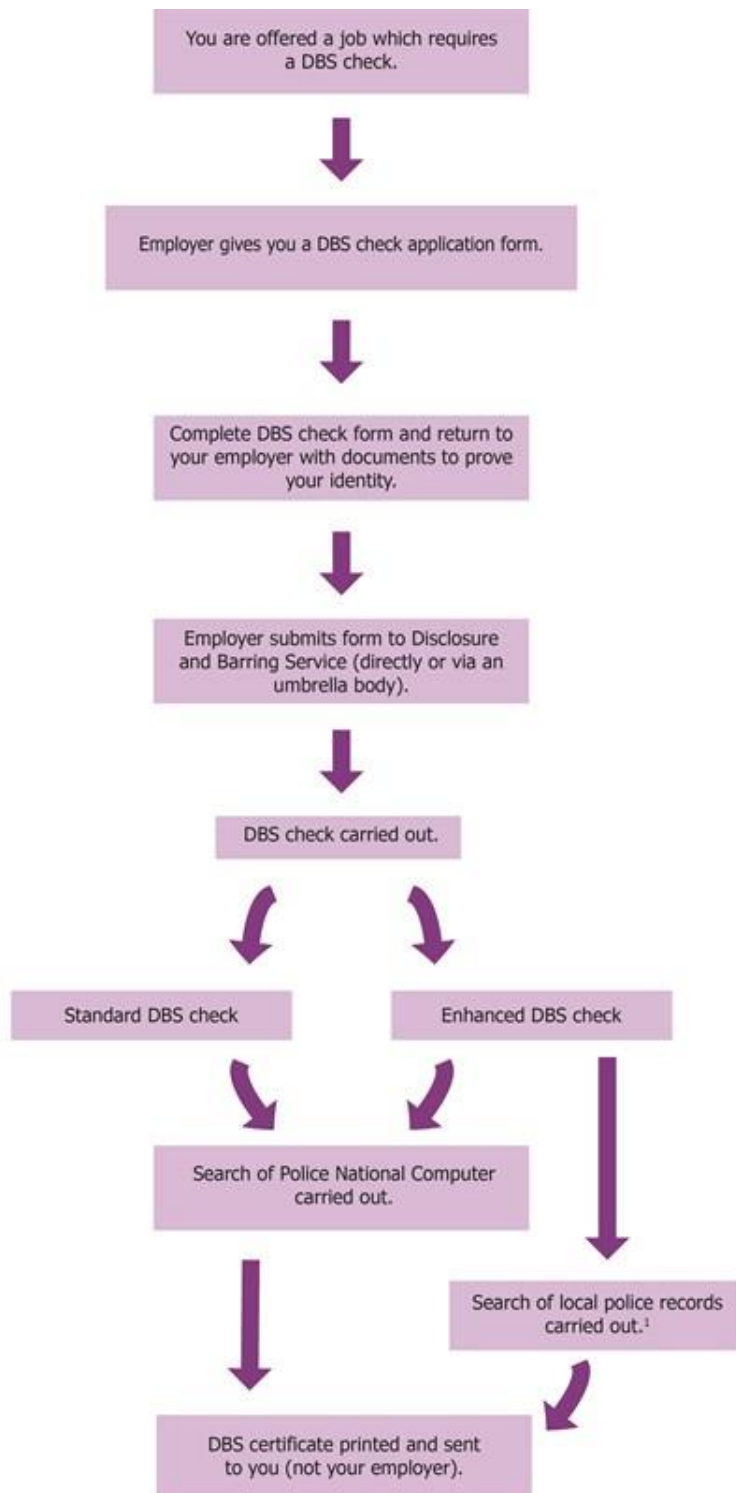
Here is the process for a standard or enhanced DBS check:

- An employer offers you a job which requires a standard or enhanced DBS check.
- Your employer gives you a DBS check application form.
- You complete the DBS check form and return it to your employer, with documents to prove your identity.
- Your employer submits the form to the DBS.
- The DBS does your check. This includes searching the Police National Computer.
- If it is an enhanced DBS check, the DBS will also search local police records.
- If the job involves caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults, the DBS may also search children's and adults' barred lists. These are lists of people who are barred from working with children or vulnerable adults.
- The DBS sends you a DBS certificate with your results of the check. It does not send this to your employer.

On the next page there is a flowchart showing the application process for a standard or enhanced DBS check.

Flowchart: What is the application process for a standard or enhanced DBS check?

Here is a flowchart showing the application process described above.



¹ A search of children's and adults' barred lists may also be undertaken if the job involves caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults.

How long does a DBS check take?

It usually takes 14 days to process a DBS check. But it can take longer if:

- You give any incorrect details for the check
- Several police forces need to be involved in the check

The timing can also depend on:

- The level of check being carried out
- Which police forces are involved in the check, as some may have backlogs in processing applications

How much does a DBS check cost?

If you need to have a standard, enhanced or enhanced with list DBS check, your employer will pay for it. Your employer may pay for you to have a basic DBS check, but you can also request and pay for this yourself.

The costs for each check are as follows:

- Basic DBS checks - £18
- Standard DBS checks - £18
- Enhanced DBS checks (including or excluding barred list check) - £38
- DBS checks for most volunteering roles are free of charge

Can I get any help filling out my application form?

The UK government has a [guide to completing the DBS application form](#). Or you could call the DBS helpline on [03000 200 190](tel:03000200190).

You could also contact a Responsible Organisation to support you with a basic DSB check. If you need a standard or enhanced check, your employer should support you with this.

What will show up on a DBS check?

This depends on the level of check you have. Standard DBS checks show more than basic checks, and enhanced checks show the most information.

This section covers:

- [What shows up on a basic DBS check?](#)
- [What shows up on a standard DBS check?](#)
- [What shows up on an enhanced DBS check?](#)
- [What about an enhanced DBS with list check?](#)
- [Will a DBS check include information about my mental health problem?](#)
- [How do the police decide what information to include in a DBS check?](#)
- [Can I find out what information a DBS check will contain in advance?](#)

What show up on a basic DBS check?

A basic DBS check will only show cautions and convictions that are [unspent](#).

You can visit the [UK government's website](#) and enter details of your caution or conviction to check whether it is spent. You don't have to give any personal information, just details of:

- The type of conviction or caution you got
- The date you got it
- The date any conditions ended or how long your sentence was

What shows up on a standard DBS check?

A standard DBS check includes more information than a basic DBS check. It will include all unspent cautions and convictions, but also some spent ones.

Some spent cautions and convictions are not included. These are known as protected or [filtered offences](#).

Cautions and convictions for offences, known as special offences, are treated differently.

Protected or filtered offences

Certain convictions and cautions are filtered during the check process for a standard or enhanced DBS. This means they won't show on your DBS certificate. Whether they are filtered depends on:

- Whether you were given a caution or conviction
- How old you were when cautioned or convicted
- How long it is since you were cautioned or convicted

You can get more information about filtering on [Unlock's website](#). Or check whether your offence will be filtered on the [government's website](#).

Specified offences

The UK government website has a [list of specified offences](#). There are over 1,000 but the most common ones are of a violent or sexual nature or relate to safeguarding of adults or children.

If you were cautioned for one of these offences when you were aged 18 or under, it can be removed from your DBS check. If you were over the age of 18, it will always appear on your DBS check.

If you were convicted for one of these offences (whatever your age), it will never be removed from a standard or enhanced DBS check.

Examples

- Lysette was 17 when she was cautioned for possession of cannabis in 2005. And she was 18 when she was convicted of possession of a class A drug and sentenced to a probation order in 2006. Her caution is protected because she was under 18. It will not show up on her DBS certificate. Her conviction would become protected 11 years after the date she was convicted, in 2017. So it would not appear on any DBS certificate applied for after that date.
- Jack was cautioned for theft in 2008 when he was 16. And he was convicted of robbery in 2009 when he was 17. He was under 18 when he received his caution, so it would not show up on a DBS certificate. But robbery is a 'specified' offence, which means it appears on the list of offences that will never be filtered. So Jack's robbery conviction will always show up on a DBS certificate.

What shows up on an enhanced DBS check?

An enhanced check contains the same information as a standard DBS check plus any extra information held about you on local police records. It will only include this extra information if the Chief Police Officer considers it relevant.

What about an enhanced DBS with list check?

This contains the same information as an enhanced DBS check. It also includes a check of the DBS's children's and adults' barred lists. This is a list of individuals who are barred from working with children or vulnerable adults. You'll only need this level of check for jobs which involve caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults.

Will a DBS check include information about my mental health problem?

A basic or standard DBS check won't include information about your mental health.

An enhanced DBS check will include certain information about you held on local police records, if the police consider it relevant. This is known as 'approved information'. You may also hear it called 'non-conviction information' or 'police intelligence'.

This could include information which relates to your mental health. For example, if you have ever been removed to a [place of safety](#) by the police under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

But it is very rare for the police to include information on an enhanced DBS check that doesn't relate to a conviction.

How do the police decide what information to include in a DBS check?

Before including information on your DBS certificate, the police must reasonably believe that the information is relevant and needs to be disclosed.

All information should be assessed on its own merits for inclusion or exclusion from a DBS certificate. And the police should consider the following when thinking about whether to include any information:

- **Whether the information is relevant to the job you have applied for.** It should be relevant and serious enough to justify inclusion. It should also be sufficiently recent. So the police should look at how old the information is, your age at the time of any incident, and your conduct since the incident. And the information should have come from a trustworthy source.
- **Any impact that disclosing this information has on you.**
- **Whether to give you the chance to comment.** The police should consider whether you should be given an opportunity to comment on the information before it is disclosed. But we understand that the police do not always do this. If you are worried about what the police might disclose, [you can find out what](#)

[information they have in advance](#). The UK government website has [guidance on what you can say about information the police may release on a DBS certificate](#).

The police have to balance any risk posed to the public against your right to privacy.

The UK government has guidance to help the police make the decisions about what information to disclose. This guidance states that being detained under sections 135(1) or 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 is unlikely to be something the police should disclose.

The police should consider whether any behaviour that led to you being detained under these sections involved risk or harm to other people. For example, if the incident involved the threat or use of violence.

In some cases, the police may believe that information relating to your mental health is relevant to a DBS check. If they do, they should give you the chance to tell them about your current health before they decide whether to disclose the information.

Example

Leila is 28 years old. When she was 18, she experienced significant mental health problems after her family member died.

On one occasion, she became very distressed in a shopping centre and was removed by the police to a [place of safety](#) under section 136 of the [Mental Health Act 1983](#). She spent a few hours in a police cell before being taken to hospital to be assessed. She has been well ever since and has never had any further involvement with the police.

Leila recently applied to work in a children's home. She has been offered the job and been sent a [DBS check](#) application form. Leila is worried that the [DBS certificate](#) will include details of when she was held in a police cell.

Because her new job will involve regular unsupervised work with children, Leila will need to have an [enhanced DBS check](#). This will include relevant information held on [local police records](#). The police will need to decide:

- Whether the information about Leila is relevant to the job at the children's home
- Whether the incident is serious enough to justify inclusion

The incident in this case did not happen because Leila committed a crime. It happened 10 years ago when Leila was 18. She has not had any involvement with the police since that time. And government guidance states that being detained under section 135(1) or 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 is 'unlikely to be something the police should disclose'.

In these circumstances, it is unlikely that the police could justify including the information. If they did, Leila could ask the DBS to [review her DBS certificate](#).

Can I find out what information a DBS check will contain in advance?

Yes. You could make a [subject access request](#) to the police to find out what information they hold about you. See our information on [accessing your personal information](#) to find out how to do this.

What if the information in my DBS check is wrong or irrelevant?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will send you a certificate with the results of your check. This gives you a chance to review and challenge any of the information in the certificate. You can ask the DBS to review your certificate if:

- **The information in the certificate is wrong**, for example if it includes information which is inaccurate or about another person
- **You feel that information in the certificate is not relevant to the job you have applied for**

If you want to challenge something in your DBS certificate, you need to complete a DBS certificate dispute form and send it the DBS. You can do this via email or in the post. Visit the UK government website to [download the certificate dispute form](#) and find guidance to help you complete the form.

You must complete and send your dispute form to the DBS within 3 months of the date on your DBS certificate. The DBS will then pass the dispute to the relevant police force to reconsider.

See our useful contacts page for details of how to contact the DBS, if you have any questions about this process.

What happens after asking for a DBS review?

A few different things can happen if you ask the DBS to review your certificate:

- If the police decide to remove or change the information which they disclosed, the DBS will send you a replacement certificate.
- If the police decide not to remove or change the information which they disclosed, the DBS will refer your dispute to the [Independent Monitor](#) to investigate.
- If the Independent Monitor agrees with you, they will ask the DBS to issue a revised DBS certificate with the irrelevant information removed.

- If the Independent Monitor does not agree with you, you may be able to take the police to court. But you would need to seek advice from a public law solicitor about this. The [Law Society](#) has a directory of solicitors that you can search to find legal support.

What if my job offer is withdrawn because of a DBS check?

If your job offer is withdrawn because of the results of a [DBS check](#), you may be able to challenge this on grounds of disability discrimination. But you can only do this if you can show that:

- The employer has changed their mind because you have a mental health problem
- They did not find any legitimate reason that you may be unsuitable for the job

If you think you may have been discriminated against in this way, you should get advice from an employment law solicitor. The Law Society has a [directory of solicitors](#) that can search to find legal support.

See our web pages on [discrimination at work](#) to find more information on disability discrimination by an employer, and how you can complain about this.

Useful contacts

Mind's services

- [Mind's helplines](#) provide information and support by phone and email.
- [Local Minds](#) offer face-to-face services across England and Wales. These services include talking therapies, peer support and advocacy.
- [Side by Side](#) is Mind's support online community for anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

How to find an advocate

To find [advocacy](#) services and groups in your area, you could call Mind's Legal Line on [0300 466 6463](#) or contact your local Mind.

If you're in hospital, you can also contact the:

- [Patient Advice Liaison Service \(PALS\)](#) in England
- [Community Health Council](#) in Wales

In some situations, you may be legally entitled to the support of an advocate. For more information, see our page on [your legal rights to advocacy](#).

Other organisations

Disclosure and Barring Service

[03000 200 190](#) (English)

[03000 200 191](#) (Welsh)

[03000 200 192](#) (Minicom)

[gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

The Disclosure and Barring Service is the public agency responsible for processing requests for criminal record checks. It runs a helpline for questions about DBS checks.

Law Society

[lawsociety.org.uk](https://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

Professional association for solicitors in England and Wales. Includes a searchable directory of solicitors.

Unlock

[01634 247 350](tel:01634247350)

[07824 113 848](tel:07824113848) (Text or WhatsApp)

unlock.org.uk

Unlock is a charity that supports people with convictions who face challenges because of their criminal record. It has online information resources and offers a helpline service.

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References are available on request.