

DBS - Frequently Asked Questions



Who can ask for a DBS check?

An employer can ask for a DBS check for certain roles. [DBS eligibility guidance](#) lists most roles that are eligible for a check. However, the guidance isn't comprehensive so [contact DBS](#) if unsure.

What are the different types of criminal records check?

There are 3 types of check. The employer or organization running the check should provide the applicant with more information about the level of check required. Criminal record check applicants must be 16 or over.

Standard This will check for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings.

Enhanced This includes the same as the standard check plus any additional information held by local police that's reasonably considered relevant to the [workforce](#) being applied for (adult, child or 'other' workforce). 'Other' workforce means those who don't work with children or adults specifically, but potentially both, e.g. taxi drivers. In this case, the police will only release information that's relevant to the post being applied for.

Enhanced with list checks This is like the enhanced check, but includes a check of the DBS [barred lists](#). An employer can only ask for a barred list check for [specific roles](#). It's a criminal offence to ask for a check for any other roles.

Who is a 'Volunteer'?

The DBS currently define a volunteer as: "a person who is engaged in any activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travelling and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives". NB if the benefit is only for close relatives the person is a care and not subject to DBS checks.

When does the DBS check 'run out'?

A DBS check has no official expiry date. Any information included will be accurate at the time the check was carried out. It is up to an employer to decide if and when a new check is needed.

Are DBS checks portable?

Applicants and employers can use the [DBS update service](#) to keep a certificate up to date or carry out checks on a potential employee's certificate.

A DBS certificate only contains information from a DBS check on a certain date and for a particular purpose.

Employers can accept a previously issued certificate but must:

- check the applicant's identity matches the details on the certificate
 - check the certificate is of the right level and type for the role applied for
- carry out a free-of-charge [status check](#) to see if new information has come to light since the certificate's issue; the applicant must have already joined the [DBS update service](#)

Can someone start work before the DBS disclosure is completed?

This is not as clear as it could be. Government guidance is as follows: 'Jobs that involve caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or adults require an enhanced DBS check. This includes checking whether someone is included in the 2 DBS 'barred lists' of individuals who are unsuitable for working with either children or adults. It's against the law for employers to employ someone or allow them to volunteer for this kind of work if they know they're on one of the barred lists.' It is best practice to wait to there is confirmation that the check has been completed before employment or volunteering commences. If the person is not providing personal care, supervising or in sole charge it may be permitted.

What is the responsibility of an employer?

Employers must [refer someone to DBS](#) if they:

- sacked them because they harmed a child or adult
- sacked them or removed them from working in [regulated activity](#) because they might have harmed a child or adult otherwise were planning to sack them for either of these reasons, but the person resigned first
- an employer is breaking the law if they don't refer someone to DBS for any of these reasons.