



Disclosure &
Barring Service

DBS Disclosure News

November 2013

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Hello, and welcome to November's DBS Disclosure News.

This month, I'm thrilled that we can bring you our new e-guide for completing the application form, which you can read about in this edition. It's really big news because the guide will help to reduce the number of application forms rejected owing to completion errors and omissions. It also demonstrates our commitment to the principle of delivering services that are digital by default wherever possible.

I see the e-guide as essential reading for *all* countersignatories and their authorised agents who act as evidence checkers - not just new recruits – so please take a few minutes to see how it can work for you. The feedback from our test audience was really positive, but don't stop sharing your thoughts because they're so useful; there's a short questionnaire at the end of the e-guide, for instance, which we'd love to hear from you about once you've had a chance to road-test the guide yourself.

Some police forces are still experiencing backlogs in clearing applications within usual processing timescales, so we're providing another update for you. We're really sorry if these delays are having a direct impact on you but rest assured, plans are in place at affected forces to ensure a return to more usual service levels, and we're already seeing some real improvements. We've made this our number one priority. It'll take some time before full recovery and we'll keep you updated until then.

Finally, we'd love to hear if there are issues or subjects that you'd like us to cover in the future or if you'd like to comment on the ones we've published so far. We'll be looking to include a sample of them in our forthcoming 'feedback' section.

Thanks for reading and best wishes.

Sue Quigley
Director for Operations (Disclosure)

Update on delays

In October's edition, we gave you the lowdown about the backlogs experienced by some police forces. From this month, we expect that some of the affected forces will begin to recover, but it may still be some months before we see full recovery at every force.

It's a testing time for us all. Despite this, we're still achieving our key target of issuing 75 per cent of all Disclosures within 14 calendar days from receipt, and we hope that the majority of you and your applicants are benefitting from this.

We know you're keen to find out where your applications are up to because over 4,000 of you have viewed our [website page](#) detailing those forces that are experiencing delays. Open the 'Police Performance 2013' table for the latest information about these delays or [police performance](#) for more general information.

Remember, our [online tracking service](#) is available free, online, 24-hours a day so you can track the progress of any application in our system.

e-guide launches today

We're delighted our new [e-guide to completing the DBS application form](#) has launched today. You can access it in English or Welsh and view guidance about downloading and using it.

Taking a section-by-section approach, the e-guide demonstrates how to complete the application form accurately and fully, so avoiding rejections and ultimately unnecessary delays. We've worked with some of you on this project from the start, and as a result we've included some scenario-based questions, because these proved popular with those who tested it.

At our training events this summer, over 90 per cent of you said you'd use an online interactive e-guide. Since then, you've helped solve compatibility issues, improve the look and feel of the finished product and helped us progress from an idea to where we are today. Thank you for your help – we really couldn't have done it without you.

Going digital means we've increased our reach as the e-guide is available to download 24-hours a day and can reach all of our intended audience at a time that best suits them.

Your feedback is vital and at the end of the e-guide you have the option to complete a short questionnaire.



Application form: important things to note

Completing question e55

To support the correct application of the filtering legislation introduced in May this year, question e55 will in time, require amendment by issuing a revised application form. In the meantime, we continue to ask you to implement this important change with your applicants.

Currently, question e55 asks the applicant:

'Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or received a caution, reprimand or warning?'

You should advise all applicants that they should now **ignore** this question, and **instead** treat this question as if they were being asked:

'Do you have any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings, which would not be filtered in line with current guidance?'

It's essential you make applicants aware of this change to ensure that the law is followed correctly.

Fair Processing Notice:

On the front page of the application form, we include a Fair Processing Notice. This states that the details you and the applicant fill in on the application form are referred to the police and other government bodies to help identify possible matches to records held against them.

There's now an update to this notice - the DBS may now also use the information provided on the certificate, or any other information we are made aware of, to inform consideration of our barring decisions. We're able to do this as legislation contained in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, gives us powers to do so.

We'll let you know when we've updated the application form with these changes.

Submitting a valid application

Did you know that DBS application form data and certificate information belong to the applicant?

The data

When an organisation asks an individual to apply for a DBS certificate, they need to tell them the reason for the check and what data and documentation is required.

Before an application has been submitted, it's essential that you confirm:

- The position is [eligible for a DBS check at the level requested](#)
- The data sent to us is accurate and complete
- The applicant is aware of, and has consented to, the use of their data in support of the application.

Failure to do so demonstrates non-compliance with the conditions attached to Registered Body registration and renders the application invalid and so it could be cancelled. It's also possible you may have breached the Data Protection Act 1998.

We're aware from customers enquiring about the progress of their application, or disputing the accuracy of certificates that, in some instances, Registered Bodies and/or their client organisations have failed to ensure the data provided is accurate and complete. This means the application is invalid and a new application should be submitted. The relevant processing fee will need to be paid again.

To save time and money, make sure the applicant checks the application details being submitted are accurate and complete. This is also an ideal opportunity to tell applicants how they can [track their application](#) online and join the [Update Service](#) with their application reference number.

Issuing the certificate

Since 17 June 2013, when new legislation was introduced, we must issue DBS certificates to the applicant only. This gives them opportunity to check that the certificate is correct and to challenge any information disclosed, before showing it to the organisation making the suitability decision.

Some applicants have reported that they haven't received their certificate and that a 'care of' address had been inserted as their current address at section b without their knowledge or consent. We only accept 'care of' addresses in very specific circumstances and then only with the applicant's express consent, not least as the use of additional addresses can increase application processing time. You mustn't alter or manipulate the applicant's data without their input and agreement as it may leave you open to challenge under Data Protection legislation.

Some applicants have also been prompted to request a reprint of their DBS Certificate by their Registered Body or employer to provide a permanent copy to the organisation considering their suitability. We won't provide a copy of a reprint in these circumstances as

it is entirely against the spirit of the legislative changes introduced in June, and inappropriately adds additional processing costs into the system.

All organisations have a legal duty to be compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998. If an applicant believes their data has been compromised, they can contact [The Information Commissioner's Office](#) who can consider action against any organisation who has manipulated or misused personal data.

Update Service: are you ticking everything off?

We know that the introduction of the Update Service may have meant adjustments in your processes, so we've been thinking about how we can carry on helping you to stay on top of this. Over the last few months, we've suggested how you can help applicants access the Update Service and how your organisation can benefit from it.

When you go through the Disclosure application process with an individual, you can do a number of things to help them join the Update Service at the earliest opportunity. We've produced an Update Service application checklist and an application form reference receipt that'll help you achieve this. Completing this list when you check and submit your applications will help improve our mutual customers' satisfaction.

Download the [checklist and application form reference receipt template](#) and use it to make sure you have:

- Completed the correct [workforce and position applied for](#) in lines one and two of field x61 within the 60 character limit
 - Directed the applicant to our website to [join the Update Service](#)
 - Provided the Disclosure application form reference number or e-reference receipt to the applicant, so that they can immediately apply to join the Update Service and [track the progress of their application online](#)
 - Made sure that we receive the Disclosure application form from you within 28 days of the applicant joining the Update Service with their application form reference number
 - Made the applicant aware that if they join the Update Service using their DBS certificate number, they only have 14 days to do so from the date the certificate was issued – with day one being the date of issue
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A big 'thank you' for your interest in the online eligibility tool

Bowled over! That's how we felt when we realised more than 200 of you had registered your interest in testing the tool ahead of its launch following our 'Online Eligibility Tool' article in last month's edition. This suggests that its launch is going to be a popular one and it's exciting to know you think the tool will be an important asset.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to do this – we really appreciated it –and we're

thrilled your feedback is so positive.

We've now contacted everyone who contacted us and advised them about the selection process, and our plans to invite those who don't make these particular tests into other pilots in the future.

The tool is still in the development phase but as soon as we're ready to hit that go button, you'll be the first to hear about it, so stay tuned!

Contacts

Address:

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Liverpool L69 3EF

For Disclosure issues and information, please phone:

Customer Services 0870 90 90 811
Minicom line 0870 90 90 344
Llinell Gymraeg 0870 90 90 223

For Barring issues and information, please phone:

01325 953 795.

As a newly merged organisation, we have two different telephone systems so we're really sorry that we can't transfer your call between our offices.

Email:

customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

Websites:

www.gov.uk/dbs

Use our online tracking service to check the progress of DBS applications by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/tracking-application-getting-certificate>