

HOW DO WE CARRY OUT DBS CHECKS IN OUR PARISH/MISSION COMMUNITY?

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Overview of how to access the Disclosure and Barring Service

In the Diocese of Exeter, DBS checks are carried out online, managed on behalf of the Diocese by ThirtyOne:Eight. Applicants enter their details into an online form and must then either meet with a local DBS Evidence Checker for their ID documents to be checked or, if social contact is subject to Government restrictions, ID documents can be scanned and emailed to the parish DBS Evidence Checker instead. The checks are then authorised by the Diocese, and ThirtyOne:Eight transfer the check details securely to the Disclosure and Barring Service using the DBS E-Bulk system. Once the checks are completed, the applicant is sent their printed certificate.

Before a parish or other appointing body can carry out DBS checks, they need to recruit one or more DBS Evidence Checkers who can initiate checks with applicants and verify their identity through face-to-face or electronic checks of their documents. The nominated DBS Evidence Checker needs to have internet access and basic computer skills (i.e. be capable of filling out online forms and sending emails with attachments). Every DBS Evidence Checker needs to register with ThirtyOne:Eight and the DBS by completing and signing the **Exeter Evidence Checker Registration Form**, having it counter-signed by the parish priest (or, in the case of a vacancy, a Churchwarden) and emailing it to the email address at the top of the form. Having done so, the new Evidence Checker will be sent their login details and guidance on how the system operates by ThirtyOne:Eight.

They will also receive a subsequent email from the Diocese with relevant documents to use to ensure each DBS application is acknowledged by the Diocese and recorded appropriately at parish level.

Parish Safeguarding Representatives usually register as a DBS Evidence Checker, but it does not need to be the same person and you can have multiple Evidence Checkers registered. If you have difficulty recruiting a DBS Evidence Checker for individual parishes, it makes sense to work on DBS checking as a benefice or mission community, with all the local evidence checking taking place under one registration code, so that any local Evidence Checker can check the ID documents of an applicant from any of the local churches. Registering multiple DBS Evidence Checkers like this to work collaboratively has several advantages. Evidence Checkers can then provide support for one another and cover for each other if someone is ill or on holiday. They can also carry out the ID checks where an applicant is related to the local Evidence Checker or the Evidence Checker themselves needs a check for a role in their church. (Note: the DBS Evidence Checker role itself is not eligible for a DBS check.) Multiple local Evidence Checkers also increases the likelihood of someone being available at a convenient time in a convenient location for applicants to get their ID documents checked promptly.

The Diocese subscribes to the **DBS Code of Practice**. Before requiring a volunteer or employee to apply for a DBS check via ThirtyOne:Eight, PCCs should make a formally minuted decision to observe the DBS Code of Practice.

Parishes, mission communities or other local groupings that are already registered to process Enhanced DBS checks can register to process Basic DBS checks by contacting the Diocesan DBS Coordinator. Further details can be found in the Notes to Accompany the Basic Disclosures Recruiters Guide.

Who pays for a DBS check?

Basic DBS checks require payment of a £23 fee levied by the DBS, regardless of whether the check is for a voluntary or paid role. Basic checks are appropriate for administrative roles. Enhanced DBS checks for volunteers (those not receiving any reward, be it payment or a qualification from the role) are free, attracting no fee from the DBS. Enhanced DBS checks relating to parish clergy or paid workers require payment of a £40 fee levied by the DBS. Parishes/appointing bodies are responsible for paying the £23 or £40 application fee to EDBF Limited (or they may require the individual to pay the fee them self, depending on the financial position of the appointing body).

Payment by BACS is preferred and account details for electronic funds transfers can be obtained from the Diocesan DBS Coordinator upon request. If paying by cheque, these should be made payable to 'EDBF Ltd' (Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance). Cheques or confirmation of electronic transfer should be sent with the Disclosure Cover Sheet to the appropriate diocesan contact (see below), who will not proceed to authorise the application without having first received the relevant payment. The online administration fee payable to ThirtyOne:Eight for every paid and voluntary application (£5.00) is borne by the Diocese.

How Does the Application Process Work?

The DBS Evidence Checker will be asked by the PCC/appointing body to initiate a check with the person being considered for appointment. The Evidence Checker will provide the applicant with details on how to complete the online form, request they complete a Confidential Declaration, and arrange to meet with the applicant to have their identity documents checked or may direct them to provide scanned copies of their documents (depending upon current Government restrictions on social contact in place at the time). The Evidence Checker will confirm the applicant's identity on the online form and will submit the check to their Diocesan contact, backing this up with a DBS Cover Sheet sent to the same contact, who will then approve it and submit it to ThirtyOne:Eight. If the applicant is unable to complete an online form themselves, they can ask for assistance from the Evidence Checker, Parish Safeguarding Rep, local Clergy or anyone else with internet access who could invite them to complete the form on their computer (or could complete it on their behalf with written permission).

The above is just a summary of the process. A more detailed overview of how the process works in the Diocese of Exeter can be seen in the DBS Parish Verifier Process Flowchart. Technical guidance is issued to DBS Evidence Checkers by ThirtyOne:Eight once they have been registered. The advice to be issued to Enhanced DBS applicants on undertaking a check is the Applicants Guide for Enhanced DBS Disclosures. Basic DBS applicants should be issued with the Applying for Basic Disclosure Applicants Guide. For Evidence Checkers registered with ThirtyOne:Eight and the Diocese of Exeter, advice on completing the DBS checking process and guidance on eligibility of applicants can be found in the Recruiters Guide for DBS Disclosures (Basic to Enhanced).

Training for DBS Evidence Checkers is available on the Diocese of Exeter website under '**DBS Verifier Training Video**'

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team have access to an electronic record of all the applications and disclosures that are issued through ThirtyOne:Eight and the Diocese of Exeter, but it is important that DBS Evidence Checkers and Parish Safeguarding Reps maintain their own Parish Information Log that will track renewals. DBS checks currently need to be renewed every 5 years.

When checking for a DBS renewal, the applicant's personal details and references are not required to be collected again, but a fresh Confidential Declaration must be completed for every Enhanced DBS check. To this end, there is a template Confidential Declaration form available to download here that will need to be completed and adopted by your parish(es) to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR).

Who Can Check Who?

The DBS Evidence Checker cannot check the identity of any member of their family, whether related by blood or by marriage. They also cannot check their own identity documents. This is a commonly encountered issue, especially in smaller parishes, and is a good reason to recruit multiple Evidence Checkers in your parish or mission community. If you need to check yourself or a relative and no other Evidence Checker is available in your parish/mission community, please contact your local Archdeacon's PA or the Diocesan DBS Coordinator who can provide the details of other Evidence Checkers near to you. (NB: when using another Evidence Checker to do identity checks, the application must be started using their own organisation code so that the check appears in their list of pending checks. They will need to provide you with a copy of the Parish Information Log once they have performed the ID check.)

Diocesan DBS Contact:

DBS Coordinator (For general DBS queries and Cathedral Checks)

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