

DBS Check guidance for Parishes: How to use the DBS Update Service

What is the DBS Update Service?

The Update Service lets employers (parishes) check the status of an existing DBS certificate with the permission of the applicant if it is for the **same** workforce where the **same** type and level of criminal record check is required. The applicant has to be specifically registered with the DBS Update Service; see below on **How do Individuals join the Update Service?**

If the role for which the DBS check is required needs a higher level of check or is for a different workforce than that which is currently registered with the Update Service then a new DBS check will need to be requested via the parish in the normal way through Thirtyone:eight.

The limitations to the consent that an individual can give include:

- They can show their own certificate to anyone (because it is their information)
- They can give consent to a parish to view their status on the Update Service

The parish can only make the status check if they could also legally request a new DBS application for the role the individual will be working in *e.g. a check that would be in the same workforce and at the same level as the original certificate.*

This is because it is initially the parish's responsibility to understand and apply the legislation to each role they are recruiting for.

Subject to the above, a parish can carry out a free, instant online check and will be given the current status of the DBS certificate.

Before using the Update Service

- The Update Service **cannot be used for Basic DBS** checks. If this level of check is required a new Exeter Diocese issued check must be applied for
- Parishes should be using the Safeguarding Hub and allow the Diocesan Safeguarding Team access to view the Hub if requested
- Parishes must obtain a Confidential Declaration Form (CDF) for applicants who require an Enhanced DBS check when recruiting the applicant and subsequently notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team if any disclosures are made on the CDF.

How do Individuals join the Update Service?

Currently, an individual can join the Update Service during the application process or within 30 days of issue of the DBS certificate.

Individuals can join the Update Service with the application e-reference number on the electronic application.

If the individual joins with their application form reference or e-reference number, the application must be received by the DBS within **28 days** of the subscription being created, or the subscription will fail.

When the applicant's DBS certificate is issued the subscription to the Update Service will then be live.

Individuals can also join after the DBS certificate being issued, using the certificate reference number. They must do this within **30 days** of the date of issue displayed on the certificate.

You can use the Exeter Diocese DBS Update Service Checklist to help applicants join the Update Service.

If individuals are interested in joining the Update Service they can also read the [detailed applicant guide](#).

What is the Cost?

There is no cost to the employer for checking a DBS held on the Update Service. The individual certificate holder will have to pay an annual subscription fee, currently £16 if they are employed, however they can recover this cost from the parish. Subscriptions for volunteer roles are free of charge and therefore no cost is applicable to either the individual certificate holder or the parish.

By registering with the Update Service an individual can take their certificate with them from role to role within the same workforce and where the same type and level of certificate is required.

How do I check the status of someone registered with the Update Service?

At the start of the online process you will be asked to complete a legal declaration confirming you have the permission of the individual and that you have the legal right to ask the exempted question.

The declaration you need to agree with is:

I confirm I have the authority of the individual to which this DBS certificate number relates to receive up-to-date information (within the meaning of section 116a of the Police Act 1997) in relation to their criminal record DBS certificate for the purposes of asking an exempted question¹ within the meaning of section 113A of the Police Act 1997; or in relation to their enhanced criminal record DBS certificate for the purposes of asking an exempted question for a prescribed purpose within the meaning of section 113B of the Police Act 1997.

¹ An exempted question means that you have the right to see spent conviction information which is not protected and a prescribed purpose means that the role is listed in Police Act regulations which give the entitlement to submit an enhanced level DBS certificate. Some prescribed purposes can also have children and adult suitability information included in the enhanced certificate. This means that apart from spent and unspent conviction information that is not protected, enhanced certificates may also contain relevant non conviction information which ought to be disclosed and in some cases a child or adult barred list status.

By making that declaration you are stating that you have the right to be given that information to make a suitability assessment and the information is at the level you are legally entitled to request in relation to the role you are recruiting for.

If you access certificate information, you have to comply with the [DBS code of practice](#) and have a policy on the [Recruitment of ex-offenders](#)².

You must be able to say 'yes' to the following questions before you carry out a status check:

- Have you seen the applicant's original certificate³?
- Have you checked their ID to confirm their identity?
- Do you have the applicant's permission?
- You are legally entitled to the same level of DBS certificate ie Enhanced?
- is the DBS certificate at the correct level for the role you require it for? For example, Enhanced against the child workforce, with a check of the child's barred list?
 - Ensure that the Certificate Number on the paper DBS Certificate exactly matches the Certificate Number of the Update Service Check
 - To ascertain which workforce the certificate is valid for, please go to the top right of the first page of the paper DBS certificate under 'Position Applied For'
 - To ascertain if the original DBS Certificate contained a check of either the Children's or Adult's Barred List, go to the second page and check the boxes headed 'DBS Children's Barred List Information' and 'DBS Adult's Barred List Information'. If the box reads 'Not Requested' then the DBS Certificate did not include a check of the Barred List. If the box reads 'None Recorded' then the DBS Certificate did include a check of the Barred List but the check was clear.

If you answer 'no' to any question you cannot carry out a status check.

If a person leaves your organisation, moves to a position where there is no legal entitlement to the same DBS check, or withdraws their consent, you must stop any further status checks.

If you continue to carry out status checks on their certificate you are breaking the law by accessing data you are not entitled to see.

You should always have the consent of the person when carrying out a status check. All status checks are recorded and can be viewed by the individual on their Update Service account.

How do I carry out a status check⁴?

After viewing the original DBS certificate, if you are legally entitled to carry out a status check and have the individual's permission, go to the DBS [Update Service](#) page and read the employers section.

You will not need to create an account to undertake free of charge status checks.

² Parishes should adopt a policy that reflects that of the Diocese.

³ You can check the [security features of a DBS certificate](#) to make sure it's genuine.

⁴ <https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/check?execution=e1s1>

Carrying out a status check on a subscription is quick and simple. You must read all instructions carefully and give:

- the name of your organisation
- your forename and surname
- the details of the DBS certificate being checked.
- the DBS certificate number
- the current surname of the DBS certificate holder as shown on their DBS certificate
- the date of birth of the DBS certificate holder in the format DD/MM/YYYY, as shown on the DBS certificate

Ensure there are no spaces after entering the information. Then read the legal declaration and tick if you agree to it.

Once you have successfully carried out a status check you will see the result of the check which should then store securely.

What does the outcome of a Status Check mean?

One of the following four results will be presented after a successful status check:

This DBS certificate did not reveal any information and remains current as no further information has been identified since its issue.

This means

- the DBS certificate when issued was blank (it did not reveal any information about the person)
- no new information has been found since its issue and can therefore be accepted as being still current and valid

This DBS certificate remains current as no further information has been identified since its issue.

This means

- the DBS certificate revealed information about the person
- no new information has been found since its issue and can therefore be accepted as being still current and valid
- **the parish must inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Team immediately**

This DBS certificate is no longer current. Please apply for a new DBS check to get the most up-to-date information.

This means

- new information has come to light since the DBS certificate was issued and you will need to apply for a new DBS check to see this new information
- **the parish must inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Team immediately**

The details entered do not match those held on our system. Please check and try again.

This means either

- the individual has not subscribed to the Update Service
- the DBS certificate has been removed from the Update Service
- you have not entered the correct information

Recording the information

DBS checks completed via the Thirtyone:Eight system are all recorded centrally by the Diocese. Where a parish has made use of the Update Service to check the status of a DBS Check this information will **not** be known to the Diocese. You must ensure that you enter this information onto the parish's Safeguarding Hub.

How often should I check the DBS Update Service?

You should only check the DBS Update Service when a DBS check is due for renewal. Currently in the Church of England this is every 3 years. Updates to information registered with the Update Service are made weekly with regards to cautions and convictions and every 9 months for intelligence or other information.

You should clearly explain to individuals registered with the Update Service the frequency with which you expect to check their status. Individuals who are registered or not should notify you of any situation which is likely to affect their suitability for their role. This would include any allegations or Police investigations that they are subject of. If anyone in any role has been cautioned by the Police or convicted of any offence that would mean that they are no longer suitable for their role they are required to inform you immediately.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team should be made aware immediately of any declarations of a conviction, caution or police investigation.