

Understanding DBS Checks



What is a DBS?

A DBS check is a background check carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in the UK. It helps employers or individuals make safer decisions when hiring someone to work with vulnerable people, such as in care and support roles.

It looks at a person's criminal record and other relevant information to assess whether they may be suitable for the role.

The main 3 levels

- Basic DBS check – shows unspent convictions only.
- Standard DBS check – shows spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands, and warnings.
- Enhanced DBS check – includes the same as a Standard check plus any relevant information held by police, and (if required) a check against the barred lists for working with children or adults.

For care and support work, an Enhanced DBS check is usually required, as it provides the highest level of detail to help protect vulnerable individuals.

Requirement for DBS checks

Under Adult Social Care arrangements, including Direct Payments, there is no specific legal requirement for individual employers or those engaging self-employed workers to obtain a DBS check. However, obtaining an appropriate level of DBS check is considered best practice and forms part of safer recruitment.

Where care and support is funded through NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC), DBS checks are typically required in line with NHS safeguarding and commissioning requirements. In these circumstances, an appropriate DBS check should be obtained prior to the worker commencing their role, in accordance with local CHC processes and agreements.

Who is responsible for the DBS check?

Where a DBS check is required, responsibility for obtaining the check and meeting any associated costs will depend on the nature of the working arrangement:

- Directly employed staff (e.g. through Direct Payments): The individual employer is responsible for arranging the DBS check and covering the cost, as part of their role as the employer.
- Self-employed workers / micro providers: The worker or provider is responsible for obtaining and funding their own DBS check.

In all cases, it remains the responsibility of the individual employer or commissioning arrangement to ensure that appropriate checks are in place prior to the commencement of care and support.

Portability of DBS Checks

DBS checks are not automatically transferable between roles. A certificate is valid at the time it is issued and may not reflect later changes.

Workers can join the DBS Update Service, allowing their certificate to be checked online with consent. If they are not registered, a new DBS check may be needed for each role.

How to get a DBS Check



Where can I go to get a DBS Check?

Support Networks can help you to apply for a DBS check through the charity Windmill Torbay. We can help you identify the appropriate level of check required and guide you through the application process for yourself or your employee

How Much do these Cost?

Prices of DBS checks vary depending on the level of check needed most checks for Personal Assistants require an enhanced DBS check.

- Enhanced with Manual ID – £64.20
- Enhanced DBS check With Digital ID – £69.80
- Enhanced DBS check with Digital ID and RTW check – £72.61

Who pays for these checks?

- Self-employed Personal Assistants (PAs) and micro providers are responsible for obtaining and funding their own DBS checks.
- Individual employers are responsible for arranging and paying for DBS checks for their employees.
- Where care is funded through NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC), funding for DBS checks should be discussed with the relevant CHC team as part of the care arrangement.

What information do I need to provide?

Self Employed

For self employed PA's we use the platform UCheck. For this we need:

Full name

Email address

They will then charge you for this service directly.

Employee

For employee's we use Devon County Council Platform. For this we need:

PA full name

PA email Address

Job Title

Employers full name

Employers email address

What ID do I need to provide

To complete a DBS check, you will need to provide identity documents to confirm your name, address and date of birth.

Typical documents include:

- Passport or driving licence
- Proof of address (such as a recent utility bill, bank statement, or council tax letter)

The exact documents required will depend on the level of DBS check and the ID validation route used. We will confirm what you need before starting your application and can guide you through the process.