



Guidance

DBS Update Service: applicant guide

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-guide-for-applicants/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide>

About the DBS Update Service

The [Update Service](https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/apply?execution=e1s1) (<https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/apply?execution=e1s1>) is an online subscription service that lets you keep your standard and enhanced DBS certificates up-to-date. It also allows organisations to check a certificate online, with your consent.

Applicants should always have control of their update service subscription. If this is not the case, please contact the organisation that arranged the subscription to find out how this has happened. If you are unable to resolve this, please contact customerservices@dbs.gov.uk.

You can use your certificate again when you apply for a position within the same workforce, where the same type and level of check is required.

The 3 workforces are child, adult and other.

The subscription lasts for one year. The service costs £16 per year and starts from the date your DBS certificate was issued. The £16 fee is payable by debit or credit card only. You can use someone else's card with their permission. If you use someone else's card and select the annual 'auto renew' option, the DBS will attempt to take the annual renewal fee from the card used to initially subscribe.

There is no charge if you are using a [volunteer](https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#volunteer-applications) (<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#volunteer-applications>) application or certificate to join the Update Service. You could save yourself a lot of time and money by joining the service.

The terms 'DBS certificate' and 'DBS check' used throughout this guide refer to DBS standard and enhanced certificates only. The Update Service is not currently available for basic checks.

The Update Service site is hosted on a secure system and is available in both English and Welsh.

Prior to subscribing to the Update Service, you should access our Update Service Privacy Policy, which can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-service-privacy-policy) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-service-privacy-policy>).

Please note, you must keep hold of your original DBS certificate in order to utilise the Update Service. Your employer will need to see this before they carry out a status check.

Benefits of joining:

- saves you time and money
- you can take your DBS certificate from role to role (if within the same workforce, where the same type and level of check is required)
- employers can carry out instant online status checks on DBS certificates that are linked to your subscription
- the service enhances safeguarding processes

Our [Update Service YouTube video for applicants](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GF9W7WOwdhY) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GF9W7WOwdhY>) details the benefits of joining.

Joining the Update Service

Only applicants that apply for a DBS check can join the Update Service.

Applicants should always have control of their update service subscription. If this is not the case, please contact the organisation that arranged the subscription to find out how this has happened. If you are unable to resolve this, please contact customerservices@dbs.gov.uk

If you are joining the Update Service when you apply for a DBS check, or during the application process, you can join using your DBS application form reference number. This can be found in the top right-hand

corner of the front page of the application form, or you can ask the person who submits your application for it.

If you join the Update Service using your application form reference number as mentioned above, your application must be received by the DBS within 28 days of you joining. When your DBS certificate is issued, we will then automatically add it to your account and your subscription to the service will be live.

You can also join the Update Service when you receive your DBS certificate, by using your certificate number. If you choose to do this, you must join the Update Service within 30 days of the 'date of issue' displayed on your certificate.

If you applied for a DBS check through an e-bulk Registered Body, you can join the Update Service using your e-reference whilst your check is being processed. The e-bulk provider will be able to provide your e-reference number.

You can also use your DBS certificate number within 30 calendar days from the 'date of issue' displayed on your certificate.

If you want to join the Update Service from overseas, the same processes as above apply.

Renewals

You can [renew your subscription to the Update Service](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide#renewing-your-subscription-to-the-update-service) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide#renewing-your-subscription-to-the-update-service>) each year.

What information you will need to join the Update Service

- name
- gender
- date of birth
- email address
- application form reference, e-reference number or your DBS certificate number
- a payment card for the Update Service fee, if applicable

The payment will be taken securely from your account. If your employer reimburses the subscription fee, it won't be subject to income tax because HMRC have made this exempt.

Your personal details must match those on your application form or the DBS certificate that you are using to join the Update Service.

You will also need to read and agree to the terms and conditions of the service.

If you have joined with your DBS application form reference number, your subscription will start from the 'date of issue' displayed on your DBS certificate. If for some reason your application form is [withdrawn](https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#withdrawing-applications) (<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#withdrawing-applications>), your Update Service fee will be refunded and your subscription will be cancelled. Fees are refunded within 31 days of making the transaction.

Make a note of your unique ID

When you join the Update Service, you need to make a note of your unique subscription ID number and keep it secure. This ID begins with the letter C and is followed with 10 randomly selected numbers. You shouldn't share this subscription ID number with anyone else, because you will use it to access your Update Service account online.

Anybody who has access to this number will be able to view the status of your certificates and may amend your contact details without your knowledge or permission.

DBS reference number(s) and unique subscription ID

To find out your application form reference number, contact the person who asked you to complete your DBS application, or phone us on 03000 200 190.

We can only give you the application form reference if we have received your application form.

The 12-digit DBS certificate number can be found on the top right-hand side of your DBS certificate.

If you forget your unique subscription ID number, call us on 03000 200 190.

What you can do with your Update Service account

When you join the Update Service you will be able to:

- view the reference details of any applications and/or DBS certificates linked to your subscription
- view the status of any DBS certificate linked to your subscription
- amend your contact details
- add and remove applications and DBS certificates
- view the details of any organisations that have made a status check of your DBS certificates
- cancel your subscription
- [renew your subscription \(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide#renewing-your-subscription-to-the-update-service>\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide#renewing-your-subscription-to-the-update-service) (we'll email you 30 days before your subscription expires)
- view the status and expiration date of your subscription

All applications and DBS certificates attached to your subscription must be in the same name. If you change your name you can link a new DBS certificate to your subscription, if your previous name is listed on the DBS certificate application.

You can add as many DBS certificates you need to your Update Service account.

If you remove a certificate, you can't add it again or use it to create another Update Service account.

If you do need more than one than one DBS certificate, it could be because:

- your employer has taken the decision not to use the Update Service for status checks
- information on your DBS certificate has been updated and is no longer current, and your certificate has been removed from the Update Service
- your existing or new employer may need another level or type of DBS certificate, different to the one you have e.g. you may have an enhanced with an adults' barred list check, but you need an enhanced with a children's barred list check
- you are working in a role listed in the [home-based positions guide \(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-home-based-positions-guide>\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-home-based-positions-guide) and you do this work in your own home

[Volunteer](https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#volunteer-applications) (<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#volunteer-applications>) subscriptions are free of charge but if you move from a volunteer position to a paid position you will need to:

- apply for a new DBS check
- re-join the Update Service
- pay the annual fee of £16 by credit or debit card

You can't add a DBS certificate for a paid position to a free subscription which was created with a DBS certificate for a voluntary position; you would need to create a new subscription for the paid-for certificate.

You can however add a DBS certificate for a volunteer position to an Update Service account that was set up for a paid-for certificate.

Lost certificates

We cannot issue replacement DBS certificates, so make sure you keep your DBS certificate safe and secure.

If you have not received your DBS certificate and our [tracking service](https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/tracking-application-getting-certificate) (<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/tracking-application-getting-certificate>) confirms it was issued more than 7 days ago, call us on 03000 200 190.

We will give you your application reference number so you can use it to subscribe to the Update Service and attach the certificate to your account. You must join the Update Service within 30 days of the original DBS certificate 'date of issue'.

Monitoring certificate status

When you add your DBS certificate to the Update Service, the DBS will keep your certificate up-to-date by regularly searching to see if any new information has come to light since its issue.

If new information is identified when we carry out the checks, you will receive a letter notifying you of the change and advising you of what to do next.

Your DBS certificate status will change if:

For all DBS certificates:

- new convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings are identified
- any amendment or change to a current conviction, caution, warning or reprimand are identified

For all enhanced DBS certificates:

- new convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings are identified; or
- any amendment or change to a current conviction, caution, warning or reprimand are identified
- any new, relevant police information is identified

For enhanced certificates with a barred list check(s):

- you are added to the barred list(s) that have been checked as part of an enhanced DBS certificate
- any amendment or change to a current conviction, caution, warning or reprimand are identified
- any new, relevant police information is identified
- you are added to the barred list(s) that have been checked as part of an enhanced DBS check

You can [log in to your account \(<https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/subscriber>\)](https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/subscriber) and check the status of your certificate at any time. You can also see a list of any employers/organisations that have checked your certificate status and how many times they have checked.

If your certificate status changes and you don't think it should have, phone us on 03000 200 190 and we'll investigate to find out what has happened.

Certificate status changes

We will notify you if your status changes on a certificate that is linked to the Update Service.

In these circumstances, we advise you to consider whether you need to discuss the basis for the status change with your employer or volunteer organisation.

If your employer asks that you get another DBS check because new information has come to light, it is a matter between you and your employer. If you do not apply for another DBS check your employer may withdraw their offer of employment, terminate your employment or move you to another job which does not require a DBS check.

If your new DBS certificate contains new information, showing this to your employer is a matter between you and them. If you do not show your new DBS certificate to your employer they may withdraw their offer of employment, terminate your employment or move you to another job which does not require a DBS check. If you don't show them your new updated DBS certificate within 28 days of receiving it, the person that countersigned the application may be entitled to request a copy from us.

If your certificate status changed because you were convicted of an offence or were placed on a barred list(s) but you have had this removed after [appealing \(<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/appeals-and-disputes>\)](https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/appeals-and-disputes), the status change will remain. You will need to apply for a new DBS check because your current certificate is no longer valid.

Update frequency

When a person adds their DBS certificate to their Update Service account the DBS will keep their DBS certificate up-to-date by regularly searching to see if any new information has come to light since its issue.

Criminal record conviction and barring information will be searched on a weekly basis for updates, as this information can change frequently.

Non-conviction information will be searched every nine months for updates, as it isn't released on many DBS certificates and changes infrequently.

These conditions are based on the number of DBS certificates which reveal this type of information, alongside the likely risk of new information coming to light in the time-periods given, and the cost of checking for changes.

Employers and organisations checking the status of your certificate(s)

You will need to consent to an employer or organisation carrying out a status check on your certificate(s). You will need to show them your original DBS certificate (DBS check). The employer however, can only make the status check if they could also legally request a new DBS check for the role that you'll be working in. This is because it is the employer's responsibility to understand and apply the relevant legislation.

The employer or organisation will need your DBS certificate 12-digit reference number, your name and date of birth. The employer can then go online and carry out a status check on your existing certificate(s).

When an employer/organisation carries out a status check they will see one of the following results:

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 didn't reveal any information about the person) and
- no new information has been found since its issue and can be accepted as being 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 but no new information has been found since its issue - it can be accepted as current and valid

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 - you will need to apply for a new DBS check to see the new information

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

This means either:

- the person has not subscribed to the Update Service
- the DBS certificate has been removed from the Update Service
- you haven't entered the correct information

If you don't want an employer or organisation to continue checking the status of your certificate(s), contact them and withdraw your consent for any future checks.

If they fail to stop, they would be breaking the law by accessing data that they are not entitled to see. If they persist you could remove the DBS certificate from your account but this would also mean other organisations would not be able to carry out a status check on it.

If they continue to carry out status checks, contact the [Information Commissioner's Office](https://ico.org.uk/) (<https://ico.org.uk/>).

We have not made it mandatory for you to join the Update Service however some employers or recruiting organisations have made it a condition of employment for individuals to join. This should be discussed with the employer or organisation directly.

Update Service statuses explained

Subscription status

New	When you apply with an application form reference number
Subscribed	When your DBS certificate is attached to your subscription
Cancelled	If you cancel your subscription
Expired	If you fail to renew your subscription

Application status (if you subscribe with a DBS check application form)

Received	When we receive your DBS check application form at the DBS
Not received	Whilst we are waiting for your DBS check application form to be received
Printed	When your DBS certificate has been printed

Update status (which shows the current status of a DBS certificate in your account)

Non-blank/No New Info	Still current
Blank/No New Info	Still current
New Info	No longer current

Early confirmation checks

If the status of your certificate changes, your employer may wish to submit an early confirmation check to see if the change is due to you being barred from working in regulated activity. They will need your consent to carry out an early confirmation check.

Your employer can only carry out this check if all the following conditions apply:

- you are subscribed to the Update Service
- a status check has indicated that the certificate is no longer up-to-date
- the certificate included a check of a barred list(s)

- the employer has your consent

If your employer carries out this check and is told that you have been barred from working with children and/or adults, you can call our barring helpline for advice on 01325 953 795.

Changes to personal information or contact details

You can change your email, mobile phone number or correspondence address at any time by [logging into your account \(https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/subscriber\)](https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/subscriber).

You can also amend your payment details, however this can only be done within 30 days of the renewal date of your subscription, and if you have selected to automatically renew.

If you change your current address, your DBS certificate will still be valid. Your address is just one piece of information used when searching the Police National Computer (PNC) for conviction information. If you are convicted of an offence when subscribed, our system will link the offence to you and cause the status of your DBS certificate to change.

You can amend your address details in your account. This does not update your DBS certificate which would still be at your old address.

If you change your name you will need to apply for a new DBS check to replace existing, linked certificates. Once your new applications are linked to your Update Service account you can remove your old certificates.

If the names declared on a certificate attached to a subscription change or are incorrect, we reserve the right to cancel the incorrect DBS certificates attached to that subscription.

Update Service and filtering rules

If you are subscribed to the Update Service and we apply [filtering rules \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-filtering-guidance\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-filtering-guidance) to remove old and minor convictions, this would not cause a status change through the Update Service.

A status change is only prompted when there is new information to be added, an offence needs to be changed or amended, or because you have become barred, whereas an offence being filtered out would mean a removal of information from your certificate.

If you wish to have a new DBS certificate which does not show the offence that has been filtered out, you will need to apply for a new DBS check.

Update Service and sensitive applications

If you are a transgender applicant and join the Update Service, your previous gender and identity will be protected unless you have given permission for your DBS certificate to contain this information.

[Email sensitive@dbs.gov.uk](mailto:sensitive@dbs.gov.uk) for more advice.

Update Service and home-based positions

When you apply for a DBS check for a [home-based position \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-home-based-positions-guide\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-home-based-positions-guide), we will carry out checks on the address as part of the application. However,

the Update Service will not continue to carry out checks on the address as part of your subscription.

You will need to discuss this with your employer or the person requesting the certificate.

Update Service and manual certificates

Sometimes it is not possible for the DBS to produce a system generated DBS certificate. When this happens, the DBS will issue a manual DBS certificate. Manual DBS certificates cannot be used to join the Update Service.

Problems accessing your account

If you are having problems logging into your Update Service account it could be because:

- you are not using the most up-to-date browser
- you have logged in with the wrong details – make sure you double check and try again
- your subscription has lapsed because you didn't renew it - you'll have to apply for a new DBS check and re-join the Update Service
- you subscribed using your DBS application form reference number but your application was not received by DBS within the required 28 day period - your subscription will have stopped and you will receive a refund. You can re-join using your DBS certificate within 30 calendar days of receiving it
- your form may have been received but there is a difference between the information on your application form and the details entered online when joining the Update Service

Renewing your Update Service subscription

Subscriptions to the Update Service last for one year from the 'date of issue' displayed on your DBS certificate. You must renew it before it expires to keep your subscription active.

You can set up automatic or manual renewals when you first register.

When you renew, your subscription for the following year will start the day after your current subscription expires.

Your subscription must be renewed by the day before it expires. You cannot renew on the expiry date because your account will be closed.

If you lose your DBS certificate, your employer should not carry out an online status check. Your employer needs to see the original copy of your DBS certificate before they carry out a status check. If your employer has not seen the original copy, you will need to apply for a new DBS certificate.

Emails about your subscription will come from 'donotreply@dbs.gov.uk'. You can add this email address to your 'safe senders' or 'safe recipients' list to make sure you receive it.

Automatic renewals

When you first register, you can choose to have your subscription automatically renewed each year.

If you have chosen automatic renewal, we will email you to let you know when your yearly fee is due.

We will attempt to take the yearly fee of £16 from the card you chose when setting up your subscription.

You do not need to do anything unless your payment details need updating.

If your payment details have changed, you can update them by [logging in to your account](https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/Subscriber) (<https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/Subscriber>) and selecting 'Renew subscription'.

Update Service does not accept direct debits. Payments must be made using a debit or credit card. Make sure your card details are up to date at least 30 days before your subscription renews.

If your automatic renewal fails, we will email you and try to take the payment again. If your renewal fails because your card details have changed, you must log in and update your card details.

If your payment fails again, your subscription will not be renewed, and you will need to apply for a new DBS check and register to the Update Service again.

Changing from automatic to manual renewals

You have the option to renew manually before your subscription expires.

If you renew manually, you can turn off automatic renewals by selecting the option to not save your card details for future payments.

Manual renewals

When you first register, you can choose to manually renew your subscription each year.

If you have chosen manual renewal, we will send you an email reminder 30 calendar days before your subscription is due to expire.

You will need to [log into your account](https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/Subscriber) (<https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/Subscriber>) and make payment within 30 days before your subscription ends.

If you do not renew your subscription 14 days before the expiry date, we will also send you a reminder letter.

If you do not make a payment, your subscription will not be renewed, and you will need to apply for a new DBS check and register to the Update Service again.

Changing from manual to automatic renewals

When you renew manually you can choose to change to automatic renewals. To do this, select the option to save your card details for future payments.

Volunteer subscriptions

Subscriptions for volunteers are free. If you are eligible for a free volunteer subscription, you will still need to renew it each year to keep it active.

We will send you an email reminder 30 days before your subscription is due to expire. You will need to confirm if you want to renew your subscription.

Make sure the email address attached to your subscription is your personal email address.

If you move from a volunteer position to a paid position, you will need to:

- apply for a new DBS check
- create a new Update Service subscription
- pay the £16 subscription fee

Cancelling your Update Service account

You can cancel your Update Service account at any time. DBS certificate(s) attached to the account will no longer be eligible to be checked online for status changes.

If you join the Update Service then wish to cancel your account the fee is non-refundable and will not be refunded. Your fee can only be refunded if you joined with your application form reference number and we didn't receive your application form within 28 days, or your DBS check application is withdrawn.

Your subscription will continue even if all DBS certificates are removed from the account. If the subscription is not renewed at the end of the subscription period, the account will close.

Any DBS certificate attached to a closed account will be removed and organisations will no longer be able to carry out status checks. If a subscription lapses you will have to apply for a new DBS check and then re-subscribe to the Update Service.

DBS helpline

Telephone 03000 200 190

Minicom 03000 200 192

Welsh 03000 200 191

International +44151 676 9390

[Email customerservices@dbs.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@dbs.gov.uk)

If emailing us, please include your full name, address telephone number and, if relevant, any DBS references numbers in your correspondence.

We cannot guarantee the security of information until it is in our possession, and will not take responsibility for this information until we receive it.



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