



Disclosure &
Barring Service

Police Performance Information December 2024

Processing Times

The current average time taken to process all applications in November was:

Enhanced – 12.5 days

Standard – 1.1 days

Basic – 1.1 days

Police performance

Of the 52 police forces and law enforcement agencies (e.g., National Crime Agency) that DBS commissions to carry out checks on their behalf, DBS sends 3 million checks per annum to forces.

Of those in November:

- on average it took 24 days for the police to return a check that had been sent to them
- 4 forces (Dyfed Powys, Hampshire, Kent and Sussex) were experiencing delays. These represent 11% of the total checks sent to forces
- 34% of aged cases held by forces at the beginning of the month were completed by the end of the month, excluding the 4 red forces this figure is 70%
- The number of Aged cases increased in November from 19,532 to 20,789. The 4 forces experiencing delays hold over 93% of all Aged cases.



Across November forces were sent 5.8k below forecast for the month.

Vacancies reduced 86 to 82 compared with October and the number of staff in training also decreased. The leaving and starting of staff across the forces is a constant challenge, with successful recruitment campaigns routinely taking three months, police vetting adding a further three months and training then taking at least six to nine months, the full positive impact from additional / newly recruited staffing is not felt for a considerable period.

We are closely monitoring the four red forces who are experiencing significant delays.

Sussex have implemented a process in late November whereby less complex cases can be completed quicker as well as tackling Aged cases. This has already started having a very positive impact on their work in progress with further detail to follow in next month's update.

Kent: further significant improvements in Kent's Aged and WiP will not be seen until at least Quarter 4 of 2024/25 as recruitment continues to prove more challenging than expected. The agreement continues between Kent and

Norfolk constabularies, who share a common IT platform, allowing Norfolk staff to access Kent intelligence files to process cases for Kent.

DBS has approved additional funding to increase staffing for Dyfed Powys whose performance was significantly affected by a force wide IT system being implemented which negatively impacted on the time the Disclosure Unit takes to complete checks. Overtime is being worked in the interim and another force is supporting by completing less complex cases.

No further significant improvements in Aged volumes will be achieved until the four forces have filled all vacant positions and staff are fully trained. This is expected to be towards the end of the financial year.

Background Information

Why do checks go to the police?

For Enhanced DBS checks only, applications will be sent to a police force if there's a potential match against the names on the application form and police systems. This means that even if an applicant has always resided in one area of the country, their check can be sent to a police force in another area that holds details of a person with the same or similar names to the applicant.

The only exception to this is if the individual is applying for a role that involves working in their own home, such as a foster carer. In this case, even if there is no potential match, the application will still be sent to relevant police forces and law enforcement agencies, so they can carry out a check on other individuals who reside at, or frequent, their home.



Throughout this process, the police may need to gather information from other organisations. There are other instances where DBS checks may be delayed, such as missing, unclear, or incorrect information. Any issues on an application form, such as missing or incorrect information will flag a 'conflict' and the application will come back to DBS to clarify the information by contacting the employer, RB, or the applicant. This will inevitably increase the length of time the DBS check takes.

If there is a match

If there is a match on the Police National Computer (PNC), or against the data held by police forces or law enforcement agencies, we'll send the application to relevant police forces or law enforcement agencies.

If there is no conflict, the forces will check for any information they hold that is relevant to the specific workforce the applicant is applying to work with, for example, the child workforce. If there is no information, the application comes back to DBS.



If they do hold information, they will assess the information's relevance to the workforce. They will decide if it is relevant and should be disclosed on the DBS certificate. Most of the time, certificates do not contain any 'approved information', as the police have decided not to disclose any information. However, they have still had to spend time reviewing the information before that decision can be taken. These checks can take a bit of time, especially if there are several forces involved.

Factors affecting performance

There are several other factors which can cause delays in forces returning checks within the SLA, including:

- a high demand for our services
- assessment of the information they hold, including in some cases obtaining legal advice on whether it appropriate for employment purposes
- offering representations or responses from representations, which can result in further information being required

