



Disclosure &  
Barring Service

# Police Performance Information November 2024

## Processing Times

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

Enhanced – 11.4 days

Standard – 1.1 days

Basic – 0.8 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 October:

- on average it took 22 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
- 39% 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 73%
- The number of Aged cases decreased across October from 19,868 to 19,532. The 4 forces experiencing delays hold over 93% of all Aged cases.



Across all forces during October forces were sent 26k under forecast. Forces have generally continued to perform well and achieved above expected output levels.

Across October, vacancies reduced very slightly from 87 to 86 compared with September 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. This means the full positive impact from additional or newly recruited staffing is not felt for a considerable period.

We are closely monitoring the four red forces who are experiencing significant delays, Hampshire reduced their percentage of aged cases they are holding from 42% to 38% across October. Overtime and other measures have been implemented in the interim.

Further significant improvements in Kent's Aged cases will not be seen until at least quarter 4 of financial year 2024/25 as recruitment continues to be a challenge. The agreement continues between Kent and Norfolk

constabularies, who share a common IT platform, that will permit Norfolk to close Kent cases and this additional support will help with tackling the delays. Until vacant positions are filled, and new staff become productive, no significant improvements in Aged volumes will be achieved until the latter end of quarter 4 across the four Red forces.

Sussex has implemented a number of measures including DBS funding additional staff to handle the increases in volumes of checks whilst in the interim have also funded overtime at the force to minimise the impact whilst new staff are recruited and trained, Training groups / buddies have also been implemented to progress staff through training stages more effectively, the funding of a dedicated training/assessor and another force similar to the agreement with Kent and Norfolk has been supporting by completing 'less complex' checks.

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

