



Disclosure &
Barring Service

Police Performance Information October 2025

Processing Times

The average time taken to process all applications in September was:

Enhanced – 11.9 days

Standard – 1.2 days

Basic – 0.9 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 September:

- on average it took 22 days for the police to return a check that had been sent to them
- 4 forces (Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Kent, Sussex and Thames Valley) were experiencing delays. These represent 12% of the total checks sent to forces
- 31% of aged cases held by forces at the beginning of the month were completed by the end of the month. The decrease in this percentage from previous months is mainly due to an issue with Hampshire's IT which has caused a significant rise in update service referrals. We are working with Hampshire to resolve this and hope to have a solution in the next 4 – 6 weeks.
- The number of Aged cases increased across September from 19,321 to 24,735, again this is mainly due to the Hampshire IT issue.
- The 4 forces experiencing delays hold 94% of all Aged cases.
- 41 of the 52 Police Disclosure Units having less than 100 Aged cases, 24 of those having 10 or less.



The overall volume sent to forces was 8.9K below forecast across September.

Vacancies slightly increased from 112 to 115, with 124 staff in training, 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 / newly recruited staffing is not felt for a considerable period.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight ongoing IT issues, and previous high rates of staff attrition are contributing factors for Hampshire's high WIP, turnaround times and Aged, all of which combined to hamper timely recovery. Overtime and other measures have been implemented in the interim. With budgeted

resource of 28.62 FTE, they have 1.95 FTE (6.8%) vacancies and 4.41 FTE (17%) of current staff are new starters and/or in training.

Kent has reduced their Aged volume by almost 60% since early January, with further improvements in Kent's Aged and WiP expected going forward. With budgeted resource of 54.2 FTE, they have 9.19 FTE (17%) vacancies and 5.78 FTE (11%) of current staff are new starters and/or in training). To tackle the long-standing performance issues Kent are also going through a restructure of the Unit which will in the longer term give them greater resilience and improve output.

Sussex have implemented a number of measures including a Gold Group which means focus at the highest level within force on Sussex's recovery including staff being seconded from other areas in the force to complete checks, DBS funding additional staff to handle the increases in volumes of checks and funded overtime to minimise the impact whilst new staff are recruited and trained. Staff have been seconded from within force and other forces who have capacity have been supporting by completing 'less complex' checks, until vacant positions are filled, and new staff become productive. Sussex have recently adopted an accelerated training programme to speed up the productivity for new starters without comprising the quality of training which will see new staff trained more quickly supporting their recovery as minimal reductions in WiP and Aged have been evident in recent months.

They have also been conducting an exercise contacting RBs for applications that are over 100 days old to enquire whether the application is still required enabling them to focus resource on checks that are still required, and your support on reviewing the ongoing requirement for these checks would be greatly appreciated. With resource of 27.17 FTE, they have 7.31 FTE (27%) vacancies, and 9.0 FTE (33%) of current staff are new starters and/or in training.

Thames Valley's productivity was impacted by the introduction of a new IT system, vacancies and the embedding of new operational practices which led to an increase in Aged cases. Staff are becoming increasing familiar with the new system and productivity is improving. With budgeted resource of 44.79 FTE, they have 4.34 FTE (10%) vacancies, and 2.86 FTE (6.3%) of current staff are new starters and/or in training.

DBS works with all police forces and law enforcement agencies on a daily basis to ensure checks are completed as quickly as possible. All applications that exceed 60 continuous days with any force are automatically identified by DBS through scheduled daily reports issued to forces to complete as soon as possible.

Each of the forces who are experiencing delays are at various stages of recruitment and training of new staff that, once fully productive, will support them in reducing Aged volumes further and achieving SLA's.

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

