



Disclosure &
Barring Service

Police Performance Information April 2025

Processing Times

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

Enhanced – 11.3 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 March:

- on average it took 21 days for the police to return a check that had been sent to them
- 3 forces (Hampshire, Kent and Sussex) were experiencing delays. These represent 8% of the total checks sent to forces
- 65% of aged cases held by forces at the beginning of the month were completed by the end of the month, excluding the 3 red forces this figure is 68%
- The number of Aged cases decreased in March from 17,290 to 16,038. The 3 forces experiencing delays hold over 85% of all Aged cases.
- Measures taken by Dyfed & Powys have resulted in an improved position for this force.



Across March forces were sent 7.6k above forecast for the month.

Vacancies increased from 92 to 99. 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: high volumes across 2022/23, continuing into 2023/24, ongoing IT issues, and staff attrition are contributing factors for the 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 27.23 FTE, they now have 1.84 FTE vacancies and 4.76 FTE (20%) new starters and/or in training.

Sussex: a number of measures have been implemented at Sussex 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; training groups / buddies implemented to progress staff through training stages more effectively; the funding of a dedicated training/assessor and other forces who have capacity have been supporting by completing 'less complex' checks, until vacant positions are filled, and new staff become productive.

Kent: further significant improvements in Kent's Aged and WiP will not be seen until at least the end of Quarter 1 of 2025/26 as recruitment is proving more challenging than expected so vacancies, now 6.25 FTE (12%) still need to be filled, and 12.36 FTE (30%) 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.

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.

We are closely monitoring the three red forces who are experiencing significant delays. No further significant improvements in Aged volumes will be achieved until the three forces have filled all vacant positions and staff are fully trained.

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

