

**Recruitment Agencies:**

# What you need to know about DBS and Background Checks

**PERSONNEL  
CHECKS**



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## Introduction

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Thank you for downloading our eBook, *Recruitment Agencies: What you need to know about DBS and Background Checks.* In this guide, we look in detail at the key knowledge and frequently asked questions about background checks in the recruitment sector.

# Hello and Welcome



## “Do recruitment agencies do DBS Checks?”

“This is one of the most common things people search for in relation to recruitment agencies. Considering over 20% of the UK’s working population have a criminal record this is no surprise.

“Historically, many businesses have discounted potential staff due to their criminal record history. So understandably, it’s a source of anxiety for many. Around 7 million people in fact.”

“But with the UK facing record staff shortages many employers are starting to change. With this in mind, its vitally important the recruitment is conducted in a safe and fair manner.”

“Recruitment legislation can be

complicated and becomes even more so when you consider background checks.”

Nearly two decades ago, Personnel Checks was just a small revenue stream within a recruitment business. Since then, we’ve grown to become the highest-rated DBS Umbrella Body in the UK. But recruitment is in our blood. We recognise the unique pressures involved in the industry.”

“That’s why we’ve put together this guide. We hope that you can use the information provided here to make your screening process as fair and compliant as possible.”

- **Jack Mellor: Managing Director**

# Conducting Compliant DBS Checks

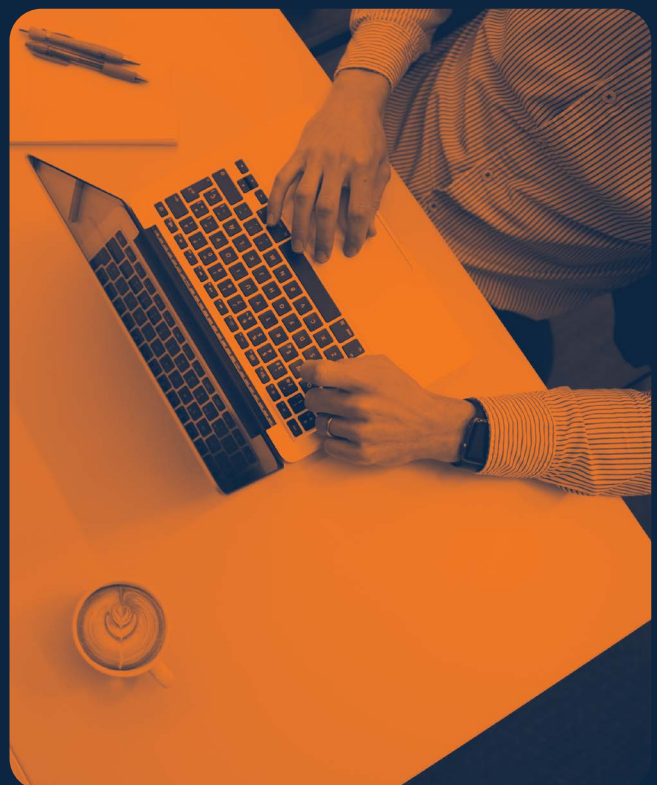


# Conducting Compliant DBS Checks

**Any organisation conducting DBS Checks as part of their recruitment process has to follow the guidelines set out in the DBS Code of Practice.**

Breaching this code is an offence. If the code is breached, you are potentially liable for prosecution. At the very least, you could lose your right to conduct DBS Checks which could be incredibly damaging for a recruitment business.

Therefore conducting DBS Checks in compliance with the Code of Practice is so important. In this section, we'll cover the key things you need to know.



### The Application Process

Anyone you are recruiting should be made aware in advance that a DBS Check is included as part of the process. This should be done as early as possible, either in the job advert itself or initial interview.

When candidates are completing their DBS application form, they must:

**01 Complete all mandatory fields in the correct format**

The correct format will be specified on the form and includes things such as dates, names and addresses.

**02 Ensure all relevant fields are completed.**

Candidates can sometimes assume that certain information is irrelevant and will not include it on the form. This can potentially invalidate the DBS Check, and another would need to be completed.

**03 Ensure all information is entered accurately**

Spelling errors, duplications and other mistakes will all invalidate the DBS Check, and another would need to be completed.

Once applications are filled in, it is your responsibility to verify their identity. This needs to be done in accordance with the DBS ID Checking Guidelines.

#### Processing Checks

If you are processing Standard or Enhanced DBS Checks you need to cross-reference three pieces of the candidate's ID, from this list, against the information on the application form to confirm their identity.

Visit **ID Guidance - Standard and Enhanced** information on ID verification.

If you are processing Basic DBS Checks you need to cross-reference two pieces of the candidate's ID, from this list, against the information on the application form to confirm their identity.

Visit **ID Guidance - Basic Applications** for more information on ID verification.

### Suitability Policy

**Any organisation conducting DBS Checks must have a written policy on the suitability of ex-offenders for employment in relevant roles. The Disclosure and Barring Service provide a sample policy, but we recommend tailoring this to your business to make it suitable.**

### Employment History Checks

Employment History Checks provide a complete history of a candidate's work history including all periods of employment, self-employment, unemployment etc. As standard, any gaps over 28 days are investigated and supported. These checks can cover 3, 5, 6 and 10 years of employment history.

These are perfect for establishing whether people have the necessary experience to fulfil the roles you're recruiting for.

### Qualification Checks

Any candidate you engage with should have the relevant qualifications required for the roles. However, qualification fraud is a growing problem, and the quality of forgeries means most frauds go unnoticed until it's too late.

Research has shown that up to 75% of admissions staff cannot recognise fraudulent degrees issued in their own institution's name. This is why external qualification checks can be a reliable way to give you peace of mind.

Qualification Checks provide a comprehensive report confirming the level and types of qualifications gained by an applicant.



### Managing Candidate

#### DBS Data

**In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, any organisation carrying out DBS Checks needs a formal written policy on the secure handling of any information provided (electronically**

When it comes to DBS data, your organisation is allowed to record the following information:

- ✓ **The date of issue of a disclosure**
- ✓ **The name of the subject**
- ✓ **The type of disclosure requested**
- ✓ **The position for which the disclosure was requested**
- ✓ **The unique reference number of the disclosure**
- ✓ **The details of the recruitment decision taken**

Disclosure information should be kept separately to an applicant's personnel file. Their DBS information should be kept securely, in a lockable, non-portable storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it. This can be a physical or digital container.

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, organisations should not keep disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints.

# Working with Vulnerable Groups

(Eligibility)



**One of the main reasons that DBS Checks exist is to help safeguard vulnerable groups in society. The main demographics this refers to is children and vulnerable adults.**

Standard and Enhanced DBS Checks provide employers with the information they need to make safe recruitment decisions on people working with these groups.

Many people wrongly assume that it's simply a matter of requesting which level of DBS Check you think is most appropriate.

But due to the personal information revealed on these checks, certain eligibility criteria need to be met before they can be carried out. This is commonly known as DBS Eligibility..

### **What is DBS Eligibility?**

Before conducting Standard or Enhanced DBS Checks, employers need to establish whether they are legally entitled to ask 'an exempted question'.

This is when employers are recruiting for a role where they are entitled by law to ask an individual to reveal their full criminal record history. These roles are covered in detail by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.

Employers need to assess the roles they are recruiting for against the DBS Eligibility Guidance to establish which level of DBS Check they are entitled to apply for.

### Choosing the Right DBS Check

There are several things to consider when deciding which type of DBS you need. These are generally:

- ✓ **The type of activity being done**
- ✓ **The people the person is working with or alongside**
- ✓ **How often the individual carries out the activity**
- ✓ **The location this activity is carried out**

Depending on how the role relates to these areas, will depend on which level of DBS Check you need.

Choosing the right one is important as it not only ensures you have all the information you need when recruiting, it also prevents you from breaching the DBS code of practice.

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**In total, there are four types of DBS Check: Basic, Standard, Enhanced, and Enhanced with Barred List search.**

### **Basic DBS Checks**

Hold no eligibility criteria, meaning they are available to anyone.

### **Standard DBS Checks**

Are usually reserved for very specific licences or jobs. For example, a Standard DBS Check is required when solicitors or chartered accountants qualify and enter the profession.

### **Enhanced DBS Checks**

contain the same information as a Standard DBS Check plus any local police information about the candidate that the police deem relevant.

### **Enhanced DBS Checks with a Barred Lists search**

This is the highest level of criminal record check available in the UK. These checks are required by people providing direct care, teaching, supervision or support to vulnerable groups.

For some jobs it is incredibly easy to decipher eligibility. Doctors and teachers for example obviously need the highest level of check. However, when it comes to specific roles like contractors on nuclear weapons sites, it gets a bit more complicated.

The Disclosure and Barring Service do provide comprehensive guidance for eligibility. However, it only covers common roles. If you are recruiting in a niche area, you may need to get in touch with Personnel Checks directly.

### Job Titles and Positions

One of the most important fields on a DBS application form is the 'Position' field. This field lets the DBS know why a candidate is eligible for the level of DBS Check that has been submitted.

It's important to note, this field does not need to include the individual's actual job title. This is because it can be entirely unrelated to the eligibility criteria that a job role meets.

In most cases, this isn't an issue. For roles like nurses, pharmacist, or nursery practitioner, the eligibility is pretty clear. But if an Enhanced DBS application form was submitted with the job title 'Electrician', the DBS would query why this person required the Enhanced check.

If the electrician is working on a project at a school, they are eligible for the Enhanced DBS Check. To make it clear to the DBS that this is the case, the position field would need to say 'Contractor on School Site'.

This is because it's the fact the person is working at a school that makes them eligible for the Enhanced DBS Check.

Some people worry that they are completing the application form wrong by not entering the exact job title. This isn't the case. What is important is to make clear what makes the position in question eligible for the level of check.



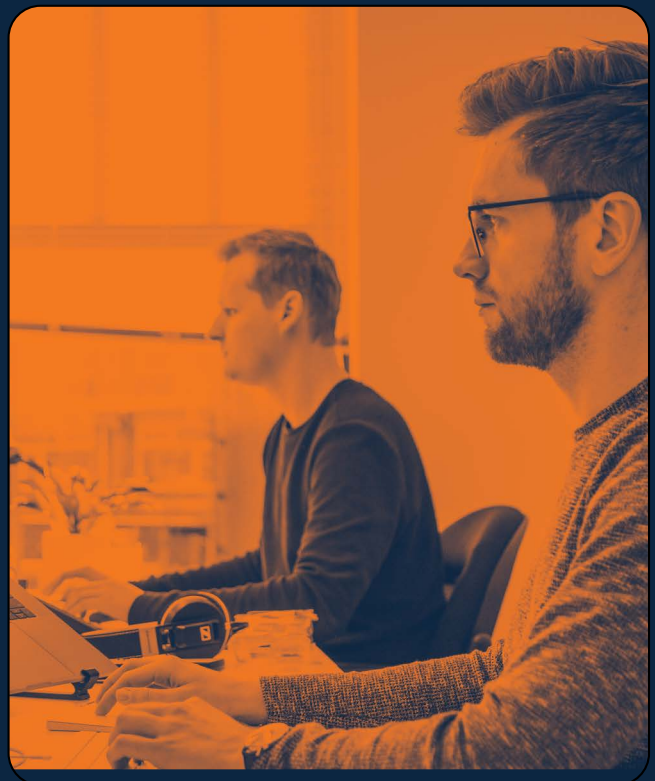
# Other Background Checks



**As a recruitment consultant, you need to be sure the people that you're recruiting are suitable. While DBS Checks are a useful tool, they are only one part of the background screening ecosystem.**

Many of the other checks on offer can help speed up the recruitment process or verify the authenticity of the information provided to you by your candidates.

The legislation around these checks is much less strict than for DBS Checks. This makes them ideal tools to have in your repertoire.





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### Reference Checks

In most cases, recruitment consultants will want to chase references themselves. This is understandable as it helps you build a picture of the candidate. But sometimes it can be difficult or impossible to gain these.

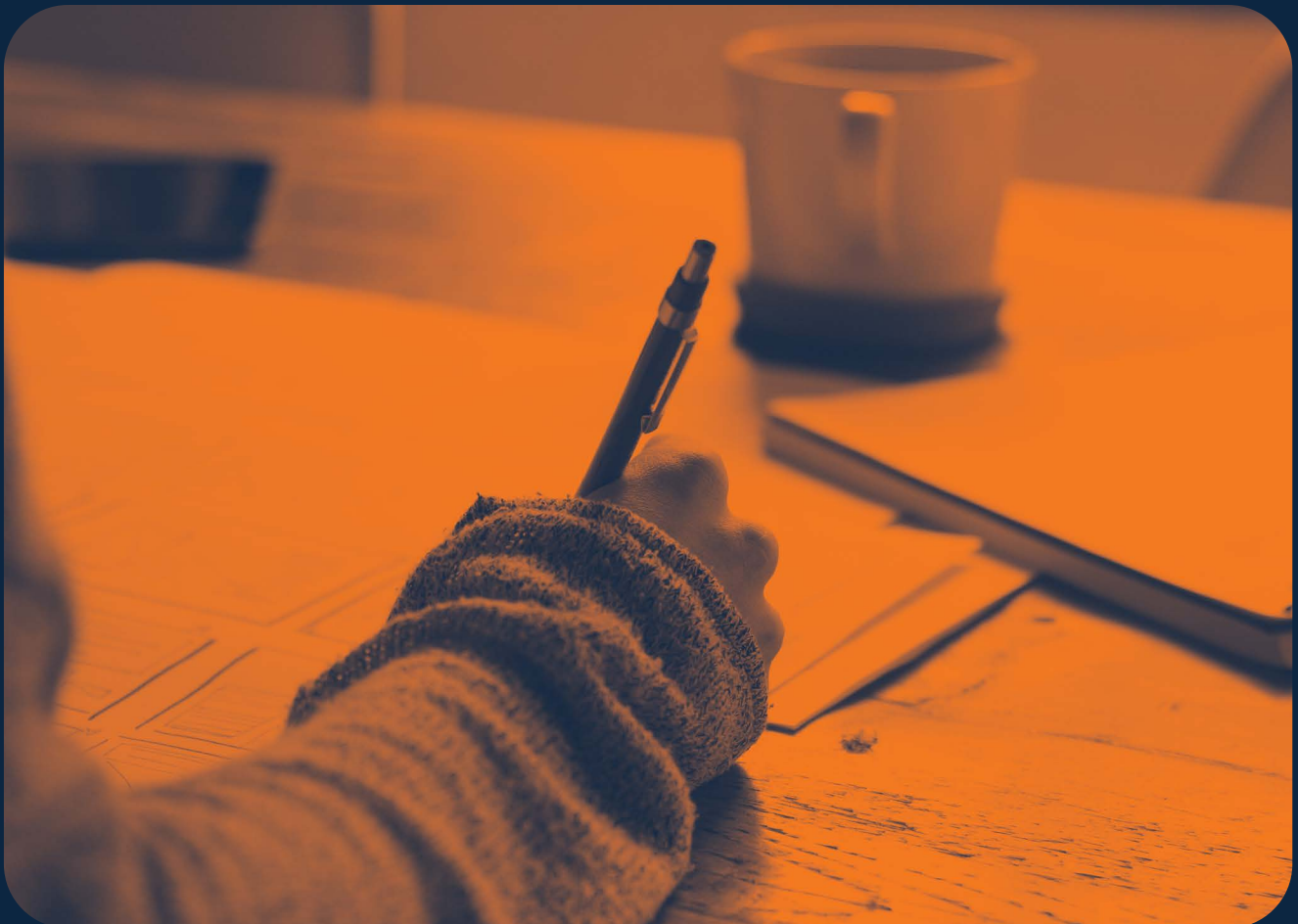
### **This is where Reference Checks come in handy**

Reference checks are a broad title that covers a lot of things. While we do offer reference checks that confirm an individual's employment history, they offer much more than that.

Our range of reference checks cover: Occupational History (up to 6 years and 10 years); Self-employment; Education, confirming level and types of qualifications gained; and many more.

### **Other Background Checks**

In more specialised roles, there may be call for more specific types of checks. For example, senior finance roles often require adverse financial or directorship checks as part of the recruitment process. In education, it may be Section 128 Checks. Whatever screening requirements you have, we can tailor a solution to fit.



## Processing Background Checks

**Relying on professional background screening and compliance organisation is the best way to ensure you get the most out of the process.**

Personnel Checks provide comprehensive screening services to a range of public and private sector financial institutions.

We can assist your firm by tailoring screening packages including any of the background checks listed in this eBook. Why not join the ever-growing community of conscientious businesses that are taking the leap into background screening?

For more information about how Personnel Checks background screening solutions can aid your organisation, get in touch! You can give us a call on **01254 355688** or drop us an email at

**[letstalk@personnelchecks.co.uk](mailto:letstalk@personnelchecks.co.uk)**