

Information Sheet

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Catholic Church in England and Wales

Introduction

The [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS) was formed in December 2012 and provides the disclosure service for England and Wales. The DBS helps employers and organisations make informed recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups.

An employer or organisation may request a criminal record check, processed through the DBS, as part of its recruitment process. The use of criminal record checks within the Church does not replace, and should complement, usual recruitment practices such as the gathering of personal details, face-to-face interview and the taking up of references (Testimonials of Suitability for clergy or Religious members). Obtaining a criminal record check should not be seen as a substitute for carrying out these pre-appointment checks.

It is a criminal offence to appoint someone who is known to be disqualified from working with children and/or adults in 'Regulated Activity'. The Church therefore has a responsibility to request criminal record checks on everybody that it is appointing to work in Regulated Activity.

The Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS) as the Registered Body

CSAS is registered with the DBS as a [Registered Body](#) on behalf of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The DBS Disclosure Application and assessment process is implemented by CSAS, via Safeguarding Co-ordinators located in dioceses, safeguarding representatives in parishes, nominated persons within religious congregations and safeguarding leads within Catholic organisations.

For DBS purposes, CSAS includes its authorised agents within the safeguarding structure who act as counter-signatories for the processing of Disclosure applications. Signed agreements exist with these agents whereby they agree to abide by the policies and procedures of CSAS and the DBS. A copy of the agreement is located in the Forms Library.

The Registered Body (CSAS) is not responsible for undertaking DBS Disclosures where these are already carried out via statutory organisations (for example staff in Catholic schools or staff in Catholic social welfare agencies).

DBS Disclosure Certificates

The document that contains details of an individual's relevant criminal record is known as the Disclosure Certificate.

Information released on Disclosure Certificates can be extremely sensitive and personal. The DBS has produced a Code of Practice for recipients of criminal record information to ensure that any information received by the Registered Body and its agents is handled fairly and used properly. See [DBS Code of Practice](#).

A breach of the DBS Code of Practice can result in the suspension or cancellation of registration.

CSAS is committed to the fair and sensitive use of disclosure information and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it, and those for whom CSAS acts as a Registered Body, seek to achieve and maintain the highest standards of practice. CSAS has a policy on the handling, storage and safe destruction of disclosure information (see [Policy on Secure Storage and Retention](#)).

Where an applicant feels that disclosure information has not been handled in a fair and sensitive way an appeal process is available. For details of this process, please refer to [Procedure for dealing with disputes - DBS, Appeals and Complaints](#).

Failure to comply with requirements set out in the Data Protection Act may also result in enforcement action from the Information Commissioner's Office.

Criminal records held overseas

The DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas and a DBS check may not provide complete view of an applicant's criminal record if they have lived outside of the UK. Employers should make sure that they have access to all the information available to them to make a safer recruitment decision. The Home Office website provides information about how to get a criminal record check for overseas applicants or for those who have lived outside of the UK. See [Criminal Records Checks for Overseas Applicants](#).