# FAQs

**Disclosure & Barred Service checks (DBS)**

All information can be found at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

**Why are these checks taking place?**

Currently staff are only automatically eligible for basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, however, legislation introduced 24 April 2023 will, when passed, mean all staff will be eligible for more rigorous standard DBS checks. Basic DBS checks only provide information on unspent cautions and unspent convictions, whereas standard DBS checks also provide information on spent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings, subject to filtering rules.

These checks will allow fire and rescue services to understand and mitigate risk, to protect their colleagues and the public, and support high standards of integrity. How and where these are used are at the discretion of each individual fire and rescue authority.

The changes follow recent findings in His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report, commissioned by the Crime, Policing and Fire Minister, as well as the London Fire Brigade’s independent review into its own culture, which found evidence of bullying, harassment and discrimination across the services.

**What is a DBS Check?**

Following the new legislation, all employees of Cumbria Fire & Rescue (Grey & Green book) will be required to have a standard DBS check carried out. If necessary, you will be informed that an enhanced check is required. The difference between each level is detailed below:

* Standard Check: Standard certificates are available for specific roles outlined in legislation. They show unspent and spent convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer, subject to filtering rules.
* Enhanced Check: This is the highest level of check available to anyone involved in work with vulnerable groups, and other positions involving a high degree of trust. Enhanced certificates contain the same information as the Standard certificate, with the addition of relevant local police force information.

**Will I need a standard or enhanced DBS check?**

A Standard DBS check can be used for any position or purpose and will be used for most roles within the service, however for certain roles, you may need a higher level of criminal record check.

The level of check required for each employee will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account your role and the duties you perform. You will be notified on the level of check that you require by your manager.

**How do I know if my caution or conviction is spent or unspent?**

If you are unsure about whether your caution or conviction is spent or unspent please refer to the poster linked below: [ROA-Unlock-A3-Poster.pdf](https://unlock.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/misc/ROA-Unlock-A3-Poster.pdf)

**What is the DBS Amnesty period?**

The DBS amnesty period is your opportunity to tell us about any existing cautions or convictions that may show up on your DBS check. All CFRS employees will be asked to complete an online form (paper version available if required). It is really important that you are honest on this form as the information provided will be cross-checked with the information on your DBS certificate.

**The amnesty period will run from Monday 28th August 2023 until Monday 25th September 2023.**

**If I don’t have a caution or conviction do I still need to fill in the amnesty form?**

Yes, it's really important that all CFRS employees and volunteers complete and sign the amnesty form even if you have nothing to declare.

**How long will it take for my DBS check to come back?**

Most standard checks will be processed within 14 days.

The time to receive an enhanced DBS certificate can take around 4-8 weeks. In rare circumstances, it can take longer than 8 weeks.

**Do I have to pay for my DBS check?**

CFRS will cover the costs of the DBS checks.

**What happens if I have something to declare/ have a criminal conviction (spent/unspent)?**

* ***Will I lose my job – what process will be taken if I have a conviction?***

Upon receiving the results of the DBS checks, if there is something that comes back that may be of interest to the service; you will work with your manager and an allocated HR advisor and each case will be dealt with individually. Any information that comes back which may be cause for concern, will of course, be handled with strict confidentiality.

**What if I refuse to declare or refuse to part take in a check?**

It is now a legal requirement for all employees of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service to have had a standard DBS check carried out. Anyone who refuses, will need to make their reasoning known to their manager and/or an HR advisor who will be able to advise accordingly.

**Who can have a copy of my DBS certificate?**

Only you can have a copy of your DBS certificate. Once you receive your certificate you **MUST NOT** take a photograph or photocopy of it, instead you will be asked to take the hard copy in for your manager to check it in person. You will then need to keep your certificate safe at home in case it needs to be checked again.

**What is the DBS update service?**

The Update Service is an online subscription that allows you to keep your standard or enhanced certificates up-to-date and allows employers to check a certificate online with your permission. It costs £13 per year, and you can pay by debit or credit card. There’s no charge if you’re a volunteer.

There is currently no expectation that your join the update service however more information on it can be found here:

DBS Update Service: applicant guide - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

**If I have a DBS certificate from somewhere else do I still need to go through another check?**

Yes, if you have gone through a DBS check with a different organisation you will need to go through one again with CFRS. However, if your check has been carried out by CFRS and your level of check has not changed you do not need to obtain another DBS check.