

Tick box



Getting it **right**?

Are you being treated properly at work?

UNISON
the public service union



Disclosure and Barring Service – branch briefing

Some Trusts/Boards pass on the costs of a DBS and/or the update service to their employees. UNISON recently celebrated a victory in Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust where they fought against individual staff having to fund the cost of updating their DBS check. You can read more about this victory [here](#).

In September 2018, UNISON issued a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to all health trusts and boards across the UK to find out more about whether the cost of the DBS is passed on to staff or is funded by the employer.

DBS Checks

DBS checks help employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups.

UNISON's policy is that staff should not have to pay for their DBS check, public protection is the duty of the employer, not the employee.

We sent FOIs to 641 employers, 259 responded (40% response rate)

Of the 259 employers who responded, 56 (22%) do not pay for the DBS check, employees have to pay at least some, if not all, of the cost. Not all Trusts provided detailed information on this but here is a selection of the responses from those who did:

- New starters have to pay for the DBS check and are not reimbursed
- Employer reimburses 50% of cost of DBS
- Any Band 6 or above who is not an internal candidate has to pay for their DBS
- Band 5 and above pay for their DBS. Trust pays for staff from bands 1 – 4
- Reimburse staff for DBS costs with the exception of TUPE transfers into the organisation
- We charge new starters for DBS checks but the Trust pay for existing staff who require a new DBS
- Staff earning over £21,000 have to pay for their own DBS
- New starters: Trust pays initially and the fee is recovered from salary
- Bands 1 and 2 pay 1/3 of DBS cost, Band 3 pay 2/3, Band 4 and above pay for their DBS in its entirety

Update service

We also asked employers in England and Wales (as the update service only applies there) about the DBS update service

The update service is an online subscription service that lets individuals keep their standard and enhanced DBS certificates up-to-date. It also allows employers to check a certificate online, with an individual's consent.

Individuals can use their certificate again when they apply for a position within the same workforce, where the same type and level of check is required. UNISON's policy is that staff should not have to pay for this service either as it is in the employer's interest.

Of the 242 English/Welsh employers who responded, 85 ask their staff to use the update service but the majority of these - 75% (or 64 employers) do not pay for or reimburse their staff for the cost of using this service.

If not, talk to UNISON.
Let's put it right together.



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What to do if your employer does not pay for your DBS check or use of the update service

UNISON members

1. Talk to your branch

UNISON branches

1. Contact your regional organising staff to talk over what is happening and keep them informed.
2. Ask your regional teams what the position is in other branches ie are there other employers within the region who do not charge?
3. Find out why the employers charge
 - a. Do they have a policy
 - b. Was it consulted on with staff side
4. Request a meeting with the employer to make the case for the employer paying for DBS checks and the update service
5. Throughout this process you should ensure that members are kept informed about developments and take on board their views
6. Build on the success of Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust to run your own campaign against DBS charges

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