

DBS Strategy 2020 - 25

Making Recruitment Safer



Disclosure &
Barring Service

Our Purpose

Protecting the public by helping employers make safer recruitment decisions and by barring individuals who pose a risk to vulnerable groups from working and volunteering in certain roles.

Our Vision

Making Recruitment Safer. By being a visible, trusted and influential organisation, providing an outstanding quality of service to all our customers and partners. Where our people understand the important safeguarding contributions they make and feel proud to work here.



‘Providing an outstanding quality of service to all our customers and partners.’

Chairman's Foreword



The Disclosure and Barring Service Board began the process of producing this five-year strategy during the summer of 2019. It was important to us that the strategy would be ambitious and focused on quality and people.

Through the delivery of this strategy the DBS will ensure that the organisation continues to develop and thrive, provide services of the highest standards, and thereby make a real contribution to the national safeguarding arena. At the outset the DBS Board took a major decision in deciding that we would 'cocreate' this strategy with our staff and partners, embarking on a wide-ranging set of both online and face to face 'Big Conversations' that resulted in over 40,000 contributions

to the strategy. As a result, we have a strategy that reflects a very strong consensus on our purpose, vision, values and priorities. This is a considerable achievement and one of which we are rightly proud. To ensure we deliver on our commitments we have also introduced new governance arrangements that will equip us to lead the implementation of the strategy through to 2025.

Quality is at the heart of this strategy. Everything we do over the next five years will contribute to playing our role in ensuring that, through our products and services, employers have the necessary information to make safe recruitment decisions. Our role now is to make sure that we deliver the strategy and we will work tirelessly to ensure that we do.

Dr Gillian Fairfield,
Chairman

Chief Executive's Introduction



The DBS is a national organisation undertaking a unique role. We issued 6 million certificates last year and maintain two Barred Lists of over 77,000 people. We employ over 1,000 staff to deliver these services.

Our work provides significant protection to the public. Quality must be at the core of what we do; quality in the products we supply and quality in the decisions that we make. Our strategic plan will further improve an already well performing organisation. It will modernise the services we provide, the way we work and the way we interact with our partners.

The strategy contains a number of practical actions that will enable the DBS to make tangible improvements to our service to the public. We will improve the way our services are accessed, the speed and efficiency of our

processes, and use technology to enhance our work. We cannot deliver this plan on our own and we will work closely with our partners, both strategically and operationally to make recruitment safer. We will also create the conditions through smarter working, better staff development and a more inclusive and diverse workforce to improve our performance.

This strategy has been written at a point in time. It outlines the direction of travel and the key priority areas we will focus on. Each year it will be refreshed through the production of an annual Business Plan which will describe how we will take the actions that deliver our strategy for that year.

I will focus my efforts to ensure we deliver this over the next five years on behalf of the Board, our workforce and the public.

Eric Robinson,
Chief Executive

Our Strategic Priorities

Quality

Provide high quality, reliable, consistent, timely and accessible services for our **customers**.

Embrace **technology** to drive improvements to the quality of our work.

People

Develop a talented and diverse **workforce** that understands how their contributions help to achieve our objectives.

Build a flexible, vibrant and contemporary **workplace** where our staff will be able to do their jobs using modern ways of working that are smart and which promote **OneDBS**.

Profile

Raise awareness of the DBS and the services we offer, **keeping people informed** through our communications, to increase public understanding and confidence in our organisation.

Be a respected and trusted organisation, working with our **partners** to play an influential role in the environment in which we operate.

‘We respect and value everyone, and we recognise and appreciate each other’s efforts.’



Our Values & Behaviours

We Work Together

We collaborate, we actively listen, learn and share information with our colleagues throughout the DBS and with our external partners.

We respect and value everyone, and we recognise and appreciate each other's efforts.

We are transparent, we communicate clearly, openly and with transparency in all our interactions at work.

We Act with Integrity

We are accountable, we take responsibility for our actions and decisions and follow through on our promises. We make sure that we treat all our colleagues fairly.

We behave with professionalism, seeking to do the right thing.

We are customer-focused, we put the needs of our customers first in all of our actions at work, making sure that we deliver the best possible service for them.

We Pursue Excellence

We challenge ourselves to be creative and explore new ways of working so that we can provide the best possible service to our customers.

We always seek to produce our best quality work, consistently and accurately.



Purpose of this document

The purpose of this strategy is to set out the direction for the DBS, identifying planned activity to improve the effectiveness of the organisation and our contribution to Making Recruitment Safer. Each year we will produce a more detailed Business Plan,

focusing on the activities planned.

The strategy is aimed at our partners, customers and our people, so that everyone has a clear understanding of our route of travel and the changes we plan to make.



Our context

The DBS is an established organisation with a clear role and remit, and long-standing ways of working. The world around us is changing rapidly and we must now respond to this context and in addition, sharpen our processes for horizon scanning and gaining insight, to ensure we embark on a continuous journey of improvement over the next five years. The DBS has a lower national profile than our role requires us to have. This ranges from a lack of awareness among employers of their duty to refer certain cases to Barring, eligibility for disclosure certificates and a low strategic profile with key stakeholders. It is important to rectify this to ensure we capture all relevant referrals.

Technology continues to evolve, and the public now want to access services digitally and hold information on their smartphones and tablets. The DBS technology is dated, our services are hard to access electronically, and our Disclosure certificates are still produced on paper. While we are continually

improving our use of technology this must now be accelerated. Many public and private organisations operate smarter working arrangements resulting in retaining staff and attracting new talent to their workforce. Research also shows that such arrangements result in an increase in productivity. The DBS is quite traditional in its current approach and must address this.

Whilst there are contextual issues that are known, some are not, for example, what the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse may recommend, how government policy may change or what new technology could become available. However, we have attempted to futureproof the strategy by concentrating on delivering significant improvements to the quality of our work. Our annual review and annual business plans will allow us to be able to adapt to any significant changes in our operating environment.

‘This ranges from a lack of awareness among employers of their duty to refer certain cases to Barring, eligibility for Disclosure certificates and a low strategic profile with key stakeholders.’

Who we are and what we do

The DBS delivers Disclosure and Barring functions on behalf of government. This includes DBS checks for England, Wales, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man and Barring functions for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We carry out this work from bases in Darlington and Liverpool.

The DBS was created in 2012 under the provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. We are a non-departmental public body (NDPB) accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State for the Home Office. We provide an important service helping to safeguard and

protect people in our society while ensuring proportionality and protecting the rights of individuals. We do this by providing relevant information, and where necessary, making barring decisions to help employers make safer recruitment decisions. The DBS issues four levels of certificates of criminal records, known as disclosure or DBS checks, and we operate a system of updating certificates through our Update Service. We also bar individuals from working in certain circumstances. Our work is funded by the fees from our disclosure customers.

‘We provide an important service helping to safeguard and protect people in our society while ensuring proportionality and protecting the rights of individuals.’



Basic DBS Check

This is available for any position or purpose and will contain details of convictions and conditional cautions that are considered to be unspent.

Standard DBS 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 DBS 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.

Enhanced with Barred List Check

An Enhanced check with Barred Lists, shows the same as an Enhanced check plus whether the applicant is in the lists of those barred from working with children of vulnerable groups, where the role is in Regulated Activity. We make informed decisions about whether an individual should be barred from engaging in Regulated Activity with children and/or adults and maintain the Children's and Adults' Barred Lists. We make informed decisions as to whether it is appropriate to remove a person from a barred list.



Strategic Priority: Quality, Objective One

We will provide high quality, reliable, consistent, timely and accessible services for our customers.

Why is it important?

Quality is at the heart of everything we do. Our partners and customers want us to improve our delivery so they can rely upon a fast and accurate service. In order to fully meet the needs of our customers we need to make accessing the DBS easier and keep them informed. Our staff have said they are keen to understand what it is our customers need and want so they can help to improve all of our products.

How will we do it?

1. Develop a New Vision for our Customer Journey for all Services

We will understand who our customers are and the journey they go on in accessing our products. This will allow us to develop a plan to improve the quality of our service and modernise the way those services are provided. This will include significant product development and improved access through assistive technology, easy read, and for people where English is not their first language.

2. Implement Legislative Change

We will carry out the necessary IT and process changes to be

compliant with any revised legislation.

3. Introduce Barring and Safeguarding Improvements

We will continue to develop and enhance our Barring service ensuring our robust and timely decisions are made accurately.

We will deliver changes to improve the way Barring is organised, its profile, our relationship with our partners, the way the service is accessed and the processes for dealing with all cases.

4. Develop our Insight and Intelligence

We will consolidate all our data within our new data warehouse, bringing together all of our business, management and performance information into one place.

This will enable us to develop insight and intelligence to identify trends, advance our research programme and help the DBS continuously improve.

5. Introduce a new Barring Portal

We will redesign the barring portal making it more user-friendly for our customers to



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access, ensuring we receive good quality barring referrals and a reduction in the volume of paper referrals.

6. Introduce a New Approach to Marketing DBS

We will produce a Marketing Plan for the DBS to enable us to better promote and develop our products.

7. Enhance our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We will enhance representation of relevant groups in the changes to our work. We will reduce the language barriers to our service particularly for those where English is not their first language.

We will know we have succeeded when...

We have developed a new operating model for the services we provide and have delivered this over five years.

Legislative change is embedded into what we do.

Improvements in performance for all our services are tangible and sustainable. Our complaints and appeals are reduced, and our performance metrics have improved.

Our insight and intelligence are being used to help us improve our service delivery.

Quality metrics have improved, and error rate decreased.

Quality, Objective Two

We will embrace technology to drive improvements to the quality of our work.

Why is it important?

Our customers want easy access to services using mobile technology. Our current IT will not meet this need and we will need to improve our technology to enable us to speed up our processes and be able to adapt quickly in the future.

Our people want us to embrace modern technology and ensure they have the right tools to provide excellent services. Our current systems require significant modernisation and there is a heavy reliance on paper rather than digital products.

How will we do it?

1. Transfer to new Technology and Customer Contact Centre Suppliers

We will transfer to two new suppliers, one to take over our technology contract the other to manage our Contact Centre.

As a result of this change, we will control the architecture of our technology platforms for the first time in our history. The transition of these services will initially be on a like-for-like basis in order to preserve service continuity, with the ability and intention to iterate and improve in the near future.

‘We will update our platform for Standard and Enhanced DBS checks to ensure that we are able to continue to provide a reliable and efficient service to our customers.’



2. Disclosure Platform Refresh

We will update our platform for Standard and Enhanced DBS checks to ensure that we are able to continue to provide a reliable and efficient service to our customers. This work has already started with the current supplier and will be completed by our IT partner.

3. Technology Delivery

We will change the way technology is delivered across the business. We will move away from large, single outsourcing arrangements which will see us separate our technology estate in order to remove the need for large technology platform replacement programmes. This enables us to decide whether an individual technology service should be insourced or outsourced, depending on the suitability of a service rather than the platform as a whole.

4. Our Target Operating Model

We will develop a new operating model to equip us to provide services in an effective way.

We will have succeeded when...

We are working effectively with new suppliers and are able to deliver change collaboratively.

We have improved our disclosure system.

We are in control of meeting our technology requirements.

We are a service that is based on modern customer-focused technology.



Strategic Priority: Our Profile, Objective Three

We will raise awareness of the DBS and the services we offer, keeping people informed through our communications, to increase public understanding in our organisation.

Why is this important?

Feedback from our customers is that they struggle to access DBS information and that our information is not always user-friendly. While our customer satisfaction surveys are largely positive, we know we can improve the information we provide about our services. Our customers want to be able to access services digitally using mobile technology and we want to provide a simple digital one-stop shop to access all disclosure and barring services and information. We acknowledge that our profile with the general public and employers needs to

be raised for us to be known as a professional and trusted organisation. We know that not all cases that require a barring referral to us reach us. We need to ensure our customers know when and how to refer. Internally we recognise the need to improve our communication which will encourage a **OneDBS** approach to support our staff.

How will we do It?

1. New Website

We will develop an improved website with greater autonomy and functionality that is



currently available, in order to communicate effectively with the public and external partners. We will undertake research to understand our customers' needs, ensure the website is user-friendly and that all our information is easily accessible. The website will also facilitate transactional services and the ability to refer to the DBS.

2. New Customer Technology

We will launch mobile technology that will provide information about our services, eligibility of checks and service levels, acting as a digital guide to the DBS.

3. New Intranet

We will introduce an intranet that enables our people to access the information they need. We will undertake user research to determine what our requirements are, work with our commercial team and suppliers to find the most appropriate product, and then develop it to our specification.

We will then carry out a phased rollout, adopting and driving a cultural change to use this new tool effectively.

4. External Campaigns

We will create strategic communication campaigns, based on information and analysis, to target different areas and promote the DBS products. This will raise awareness of the DBS and allow us to better safeguard vulnerable groups in society.

5. Internal Communication

We will design a communications framework that ensures we communicate, interact and engage with our staff so they are kept informed about all aspects of our work.

6. Staff Participation and Engagement

We will implement a new staff engagement plan that will give colleagues opportunities to have continuous involvement in how the organisation progresses. We will develop a model that gives the DBS the chance to have more authentic conversations with our staff, so they feel they are being listened to and involved.

7. Image

We will develop our image and strengthen our brand in order to establish our identity as a recognisable organisation in the safeguarding community.

This will involve using creative concepts to make our information more accessible and understandable.

We will know we have succeeded when...

We have increased awareness of the DBS and promoted the role the organisation plays in 'Making Recruitment Safer'.

We have increased our staff satisfaction.

Number of online and relevant referrals have increased.

'We acknowledge that our profile with the general public and employers needs to be raised for us to be known as a professional and trusted organisation.'

Our Profile, Objective Four

We will become a respected and trusted organisation, working with our partners to play an influential role in the environment in which we operate.

Why is this important?

Our success in delivering our strategy is dependent on working with our partners in a collaborative way.

During our discussions with key partners, they have made it clear that they want a closer relationship with the DBS to help shape the future of how we provide our service so that their needs are reflected.

From our outreach work it is clear that many employers do not understand their duty to refer to barring and our data supports this. Without the right referrals at the appropriate time we are unable to bar an individual and prevent them from working with vulnerable groups.

We need to work with our partners to raise awareness about the duty to refer and enable us to fulfil our statutory function. During the cocreation of this strategy our staff strongly echoed this view.

How will we do it?

1. We will Develop a new Partnership Plan

A new plan will be agreed to help the DBS better manage all our relationships with key partners. We will work with our partners to

understand their needs, grow our profile and improve the quality of our services.

2. We will Restructure to Deliver the Partnership Plan

We will bring together the different teams in our organisation that oversee our work with various partners and create one function that can coordinate and deliver our plan, ensuring our relationships with partners are productive and meaningful.

3. We will Introduce Regional Outreach Workers

We will provide advice and guidance on eligibility for, and the correct use of, the DBS products and services to employers, voluntary organisations, referring organisations and those we seek information from in relation to referrals.

We will raise awareness of the DBS in each region and act as the point of contact for all things DBS.

4. We will Develop our Relationship with the Home Office and other Government Departments

We will work with colleagues across government, learn from

‘We will provide advice and guidance on eligibility for, and the correct use of, DBS products and services to employers, voluntary organisations, referring organisations and those we seek information from in relation to referral.’

them and share best practice in our work. This will include sharing our research outcomes and where appropriate publishing our findings.

5. We will Develop a Work Programme with Registered Bodies and Responsible Organisations

We will develop an ambitious work programme with the Registered Bodies, Umbrella Bodies and Responsible Organisations to improve the quality of our services to the public and ensure they have a voice in the changes we plan to deliver.

6. We will Develop a Work Programme with the Police

We will develop an agreed work programme with the Police to optimise our working relationship.

This will consider what work we currently send to the police and how the work is managed within the police, in order to speed up the delivery of the results of their considerations.

7. We will Host an Annual DBS Conference

We will organise an annual

conference for customers and partners to showcase the changes we will deliver and any changes in safeguarding that impact our work.

8. We will Develop and Implement an Intelligent Client Function

We will manage our relationships with all our suppliers more effectively through a new function to drive value for money from these contracts and ensure innovation in delivery of our products and services.

We will know we have succeeded when...

We have increased our collaboration and effectiveness with our partners.

The number of barring referrals have increased.

Improvements in performance for all our services are tangible and sustainable across our end-to-end process.

Strategic Priority: Our People, Objective Five

We will develop a talented and diverse workforce that understands how their contributions help to achieve our objectives.

Why is it important?

To successfully deliver this strategy we need to be an effective and efficient organisation. We need to attract and retain skilled staff to continue to develop our business.

Our people have lots of ideas and suggestions and want to have a voice in our future. They recognise, that in order to be able to do their jobs to the very best of their ability. they need to continuously develop their skills.

We need a new culture that promotes **OneDBS**, is open and inclusive, encourages innovation, creativity and celebrates diversity, moving the DBS forward year on year.

How will we do it?

1. We Will Develop a DBS Academy

We will develop a DBS academy that will focus on co-ordinating all activity on learning and development. This will include developing an accreditation scheme for specific roles and ensuring continuous development of our people.

2. We will Create a new Human Resources (HR) and Organisation Development Team

We will build on the current HR resource and capability for organisation development, with the academy, and to assist the organisational culture change.

3. We will Implement a new Pay Policy

A pay policy will be implemented which allows us to address discrepancies in pay and then build a sustainable model for the future. This will result in our people having the opportunity to move through pay scales as they develop their skills. We will work with government to deliver this.

4. We will Implement a new Reward and Recognition Scheme

A reward and recognition scheme will be developed that acknowledges and recognises the achievements of our people, making them feel valued.

5. We will Implement a New HR System, Metis

We will transition to a new HR system, Metis, which will allow



‘We will develop a DBS academy that will focus on co-ordinating all activity on learning and development.’

staff and managers to self-serve. Metis will also provide new functionality to support learning activities, talent management, and workforce planning. We will work with government on this.

6. New Organisational Structure

We will embed a new Senior Management and organisational structure to ensure this strategy can be delivered. Our senior managers will embrace our new values and behaviours to help us support our people through the changes ahead.

7. New Business Change and Transformation Function Set Up

We will create a fit-for-purpose transformation function to manage the exciting projects and plans we have for the next five years. This will ensure our

work is managed efficiently and delivers the outcomes.

8. Enhancing our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We will enhance representation of relevant groups in the changes to our work ensuring our people have equal access to opportunities and ensuring fair treatment.

We will know we have succeeded when...

Our overall staff engagement index has improved.

Have a more diverse workforce.

We have a better trained and supported workforce.

Our culture fits better with our Values and Behaviours.

Metis is implemented.

Our People, Objective Six

We will build a flexible, vibrant and contemporary workplace where our staff will be able to do their jobs using modern ways of working that are smart and which promote OneDBS.

Why is it important?

The DBS operates from two sites with most staff working in a traditional office environment. We want to be an organisation where flexibility is the default. We will have the tools to allow our staff to work remotely in a way that aids recruitment and retention and encourages increased productivity. We will have cutting edge, modern facilities and accessible technology which gives everyone what they need to be effective.

How will we do it?

1. We will Agree a Smarter Working Policy

A new policy will be developed to underpin the DBS moving to a fully operational smarter working arrangement. The policy will include information on areas such as security and working hours, managed by outcome.

‘We will have cutting edge, modern facilities and accessible technology which gives everyone what they need to be effective.’



2. We will Implement Remote working Arrangements in Darlington and Liverpool

The Smarter Working Policy will identify the flexibility that each member of staff will have in being able to work from home, the office or another building.

3. We will Redesign our Darlington and Liverpool Offices

We will modernise our spaces to include collaborative spaces, modern facilities and a better working environment.

4. We will Introduce a Staff Wellbeing Plan

We will develop an integrated staff wellbeing plan to support the new ways of working. This will promote mental and physical health, and support staff to achieve greater wellbeing.

5. An Innovative Green Plan

We will develop and implement a sustainable work environment which is cost-efficient. This includes how we can reduce wastage and improve our workspace so that it inspires and attracts our staff, and the provision of electric charging points.

We will know we have succeeded when...

We have increased staff satisfaction with their working environment.

Our productivity has improved.

We generate less waste.



Supporting Our Strategy

Governance

The Board will oversee the delivery of this strategy and will work closely with the Home Office in doing so. The Board has set up a Change Committee which will meet regularly to assure the strategy's progress. Similar arrangements are in place at executive level. We will review the strategy after three years and make any necessary adjustments based on our progress and external environment.

Transformation and Programme Management

A new Business Change and Transformation Directorate is being set up to secure the right capacity and capability to deliver this strategy and to ensure the right programme and project management arrangements are in place to deliver the key priorities.

Finance and Funding

We are funded by the fees from our disclosure customers. Our income is dependent upon the volumes

of applications for checks and Update Service subscriptions received each year. Fees for Standard and Enhanced DBS checks and the Update Service allow volunteer applications to be processed free-of-charge. The fee income generated from checks also funds our Barring operation.

We will set a budget within each annual Business Plan which will include the costs for delivery of this strategy. Over the period of the plan we will regularly review our fees to ensure that our costs are aligned, and that we are adhering to the principles of managing public money.

We recognise there is a cost for our services borne by employers and individuals, and we aim to improve our efficiency so that we can reduce our fees over the course of the strategy.

Reporting on Delivery

In each year's Business Plan the Board will agree a set of targets and measures to monitor





‘This DBS strategy is ambitious and focused on quality, profile and people.’

our progress in delivering the strategy. We will report our progress through our Annual Report and Accounts. Both our publications will be available through our website.

Conclusion

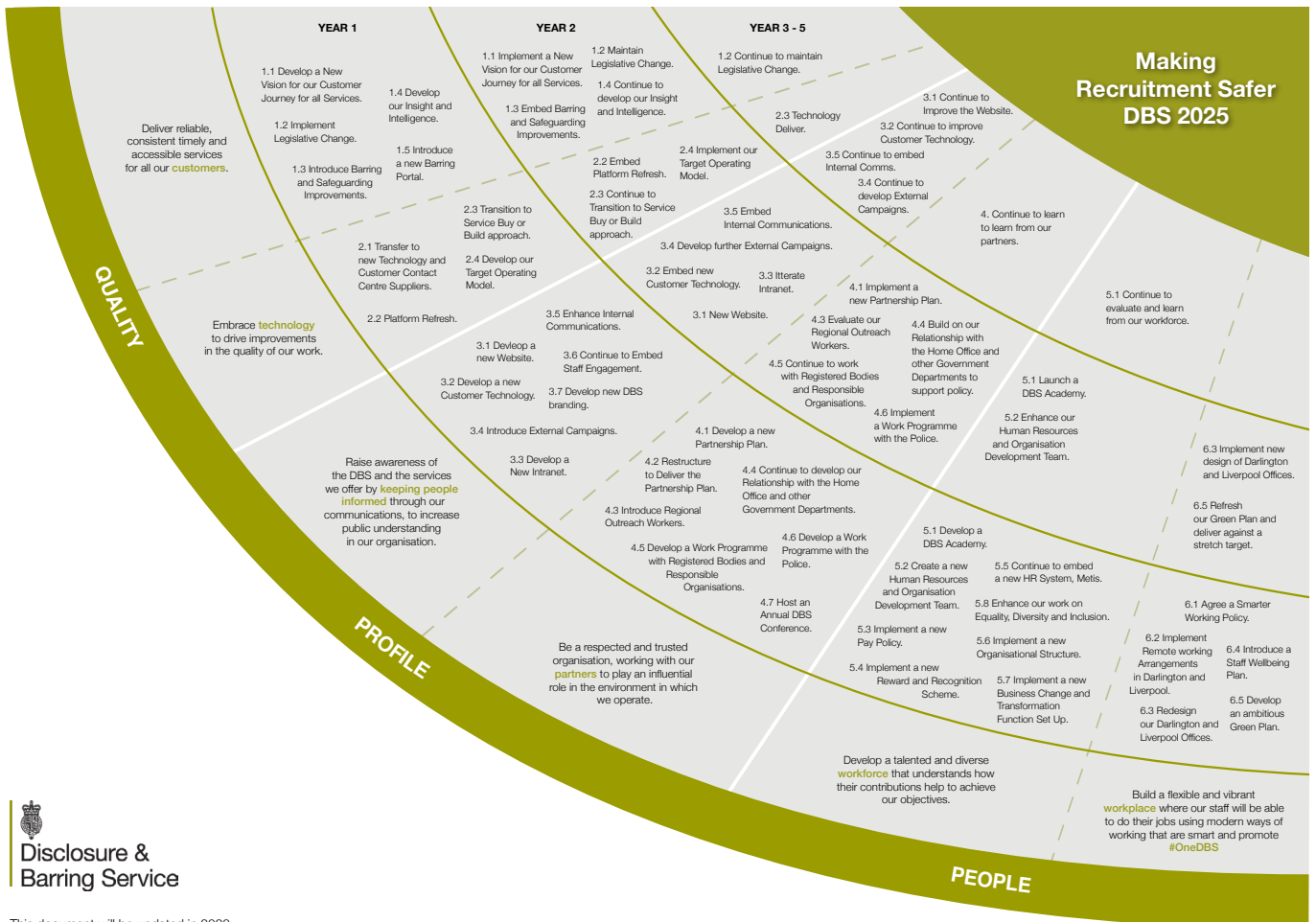
This DBS strategy is ambitious and focused on quality and people. It provides clarity of our purpose, vision, strategic priorities and objectives, how we will behave and the values we embody. It sets out what we want to achieve in order to improve the quality of our

products and services and the range of actions we will take to deliver this. The next five years will be a journey of continuous improvement and will see significant and positive change. We will continue to look to the future and ensure that we never fall behind. Our ultimate aim is to enable employers to make safer recruitment decisions. We look forward to working with our staff, our partners and the public to ensure that the DBS plays its role in this important safeguarding arena.

Our Strategy on a Page

We have developed a simple visual to show our vision, strategic priorities, objectives and our initial high level plan of work. Our initial focus has been on what we will deliver in the first few years of this strategy. We will update this visual in 2023 to

reflect what we plan to deliver in the remaining years of the strategy. A more detailed version will be produced and published in our annual Business Plan each year showing our specific actions and changes that will be delivered in that timeframe.



Find out more about DBS

Visit our website at: www.gov.uk/dbs

Find us on our various social media platforms:

Twitter: @DBSgovuk

LinkedIn: Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Youtube: Disclosure and Barring Service

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