



Anne Clarke AM  
Chair of the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee  
City Hall  
Kamal Churchie Way  
London  
E16 1ZE

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26 July 2023

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your letter of 16 June regarding Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosures and London Fire Brigade (LFB).

I entirely agree with you on the importance of criminal record checks. These checks are vital to ensure that we identify and mitigate potential risks which may be posed by individuals working in our fire and rescue services (FRSs). In doing so, we help protect the public, employees, and the reputation of our FRSs.

Your letter discusses the present eligibility of fire and rescue authority (FRA) employees for DBS checks. It is perhaps helpful if I begin by clarifying the present situation relating to eligibility.

At present, as you note, Basic DBS checks are available to FRA employees. These checks are available to anyone for any purpose. In addition, there is already eligibility for Enhanced DBS checks (with or without a check of the relevant barred list) for FRA employees conducting certain activities. Joint guidance, produced by the DBS and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), explains the types of roles eligible for Enhanced DBS checks under the existing criteria, and can be accessed at: [Pre-employment checks | NFCC CPO \(ukfrs.com\)](#).

Further, we have now provided eligibility for Standard DBS checks for all FRA employees. The legislation enabling this change (the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2023) came into force on 6 July. I am pleased that, in passing this legislation, Government has also met a recommendation from the recent fire inspectorate spotlight report on values and culture.

The NFCC and DBS guidance noted above will also be published on 6 July, in alignment with the change to legislation, following a successful consultation on the guidance over the summer. The guidance will be published on the safeguarding pages of UKFRS.com. You will also wish to have regard to the Safeguarding Fire Standard published by the Fire Standards Board and the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

While we have already taken significant steps on criminal record checks, we are also exploring these issues further. The Home Office-funded Fire Safeguarding Board, hosted by the NFCC, continues to consider what additional support FRSs may need. I understand the LFB is a member of the Board and I would encourage you to use this position to help the fire sector to explore these issues.

I would like to thank you for your letter on this important issue and encourage you to make appropriate use of the eligibility I have outlined above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Philp', written in a cursive style.

**Rt Hon Chris Philp MP**