



Criminal Records Checks for Call to the Bar

Overview

From the Call to the Bar in July 2021, the Bar Standards Board requires that all those applying for Call undergo a Standard UK Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record check. Additionally, those who have resided in a country / countries outside of the UK for 12 months or more, at any point during the 5 years preceding their application for Call, will need to undergo the equivalent international criminal record check/s.

The criminal records check/s form part of the Fit and Proper Person checks required prior to Call to the Bar; further information regarding these checks can be found [on the Bar Standards Board website](#).

The Inns have engaged an experienced external company, Due Diligence Checking Ltd (DDC), to administer the process of obtaining the necessary checks. We are confident that this will ensure the process is as straightforward and quick as possible for you.

Costs

You will need to pay for the cost of the Standard DBS check at £23.50 plus the administration fee. Additional costs for the following might also be applicable:

- the cost for the relevant international check/s
- the cost for translation, if the criminal record report is produced in a language other than English
- the cost for identification (ID) verification via a video call
- the cost of postage or courier of documentation, if ID verification via video call

You can find an overview of all related costs here: <https://www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Criminal-Records-Check-Costs-for-Applicants-2025.pdf>

Identification (ID) Checks

A crucial part of the process is the verification of applicant identification (ID) by DDC.

As current government guidelines prevent DDC from verifying applicant ID in person, verification of ID is completed via a video link for all those applying for Call.

Applicants residing outside of the UK will also have to pay for the postage/courier costs associated with having their identification documentation returned to them.

It may be necessary for DDC to undertake a search with an external organisation for the purposes of verifying your identity. To do so, the organisation (Sterling Check) may check the name, address and date of birth you supply against any particulars on any database (public or otherwise) to which they have access. A record of the search will be retained but will not be visible to other parties or affect your credit rating. You will be required to provide written consent for this search to be undertaken ahead of the process of obtaining criminal record checks commencing. This is consent required for DDC's business purposes and is not consent for the processing of data under GDPR.

Lifespan of Checks

You must have undergone the required criminal record check/s before you can be Called to the Bar. Each check has a lifespan of 12 months from the date of issuance and will be considered valid for any Call ceremonies scheduled to occur within that period.

We cannot accept previously obtained DBS checks or criminal record checks issued by other organisations.

Processing Time for Checks

After you have submitted the online application form, payment has been made and the identification (ID) checks have been completed, DDC will seek to obtain the Standard UK DBS check and, if required, the necessary international criminal record check/s.

Normally, the check/s will be returned to the applicant and Inn as follows:

- Standard UK DBS check – within 4 weeks
- International checks – within 8 weeks for the majority of checks, but processing times will vary country to country. For further guidance on the processing time for a specific country, please contact DDC.

Data and Privacy

To facilitate these checks, and to ensure they are carried out in good time for applicants to be called to the Bar, it is necessary for the Inn to transfer some of your data to Due Diligence Checking Ltd (DDC). The Inn's policies on data protection, privacy and criminal records checks are available on our website: www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/policies/. The policies of particular relevance for the criminal records checks and fit and proper checks are the Supplemental Privacy Notice, the Appropriate Policy Document, and the Ex-Offenders Policy.

Further Questions

DDC have been tasked with delivering applicant identification (ID) checks, obtaining DBS checks and, if necessary, obtaining the equivalent overseas checks. After reading the above, if you have queries regarding what the process will entail for you, please contact DDC [here](#) and not the Inn.