

Business Plan 2023-2024

Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark does not apply to the diagrams in this document.

We are Disclosure Scotland, an executive agency of the Scottish Government. We provide customers with accurate information about criminal histories, in good time, and bar (ban) unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. Last year we processed 607,535 disclosure applications and maintained a list of over 1,300 people barred from working with children or vulnerable adults.

What we do

- We help Scotland flourish and become a safer, more inclusive place to live.
- We make communities safer by making sure unsuitable people do not work with people who are vulnerable.
- We contribute to inclusive and fair recruitment, helping employers make informed decisions.

We do these things through our three essential functions: disclose, protect, and promote.

Our functions are defined by five pieces of legislation.

- Police Act 1997 (part V)
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019
- Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019
- Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020

Our role is to support ministers. We help to deliver the Programme for Government and contribute to meeting Scotland's National Performance Framework, which sets out the purpose and values we uphold.

We contribute towards the Scottish Government's vision 'In the service of Scotland.' This sets out the type of organisation we need to be, and how we will work together to achieve the national outcomes for Scotland and improve the lives of the people of Scotland.



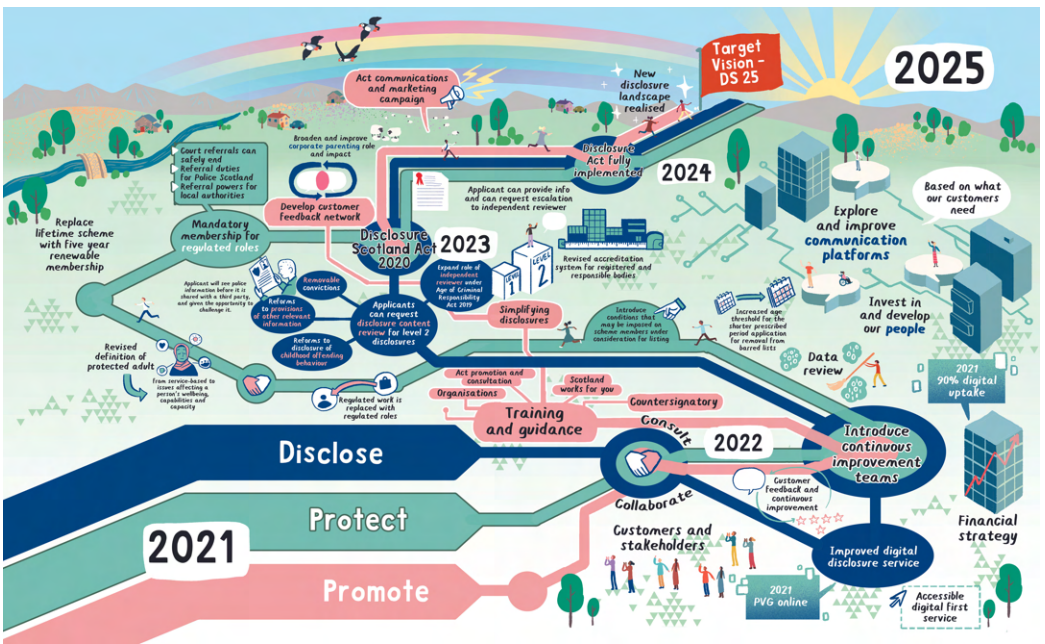
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Our vision for the future

Our Corporate Strategy and Plan 2021 to 2025 (DS 25) sets out a clearly defined, long-term vision for Disclosure Scotland. DS 25 sets out what we are working towards and how our decisions are shaped. It guides the activities and actions in every part of the organisation, including this business plan.

In 2023-2024 we will develop a 'Target Operating Model' (a description of how we work), led by our vision and based on our customers' experiences. This operating model will allow us to plan for the future, to give our customers the disclosure services they need.

The diagram below plots our 'path' (including the actions we will take to continue to deliver our strategic aims and outcomes) through many different but linked opportunities. It shows the main milestones from now to 2025.



Our people

Our people are essential to our continued success and delivering our vision. We have developed a clear and ambitious People Strategy to make sure that our organisation has a diverse and capable workforce, with people who are in the right places, have the right skills, and can adapt to and embrace new ways of working in order to meet our future needs. Having a diverse range of people, who are encouraged to share their views and experiences, will enable us to bring unique perspectives into the decision-making process.

We will promote a fair, engaged, healthy and inclusive culture where our people's health and wellbeing are important to us.

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Our vision

This business plan sets out the objectives and actions we have set for the year ahead to achieve our aims set out in DS 25.

Our priorities include a focus on the move towards high-quality digital services, preparing for the policy benefits arising from the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, and being as efficient and cost-effective as we can. We will base our approach on our values and the principle that those who use our services help us to design them.

Safeguarding (protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect) is at the heart of everything we do to improve the quality of our services and the decisions we make. By putting safeguarding above everything else and continuing to collaborate across our own teams and with external organisations, we will achieve our objectives and be able to respond to unforeseen events.

Applying change and improvement across our organisation

Our programme of work for 2023-2024 focuses on continuous improvement – looking at how we can become more efficient, improve the results we deliver, and contribute to public-service outcomes. In 2023-2024 we will also introduce a continuous improvement team to look at other ways we can improve.

In 2022-2023 we made changes to our governance structure to support the next part of our programme for change. We identified where we can make the structure more effective and streamlined while still promoting collaboration and allowing for internal and external stakeholders to work together.

We will continue to promote continuous improvement, through innovation and collaboration with our people, partners and stakeholders, to make sure the services we provide are dynamic, streamlined, of a high quality, and tailored to users.

There is more information about our governance structure in our [framework document](#).

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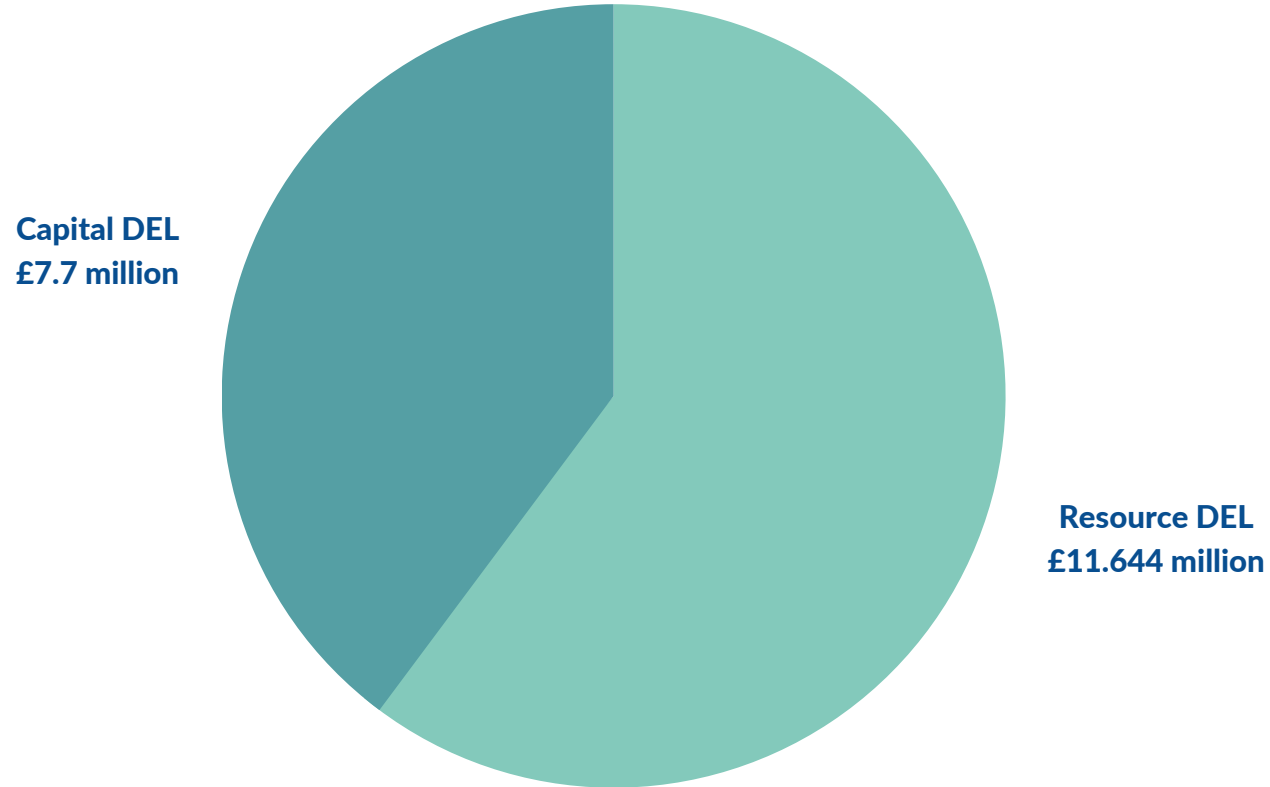
Finance

The diagram below sets out our budget for 2023-2024.

Capital DEL is money for spending on assets, investments and things that will create growth in the future, within the Department Expenditure Limit (the amount that government departments have been allocated to spend).

Resource DEL is money for spending on day-to-day items and administration costs within the Department Expenditure Limit.

We will continue to contribute to economic recovery by running an efficient organisation that provides value for public money.



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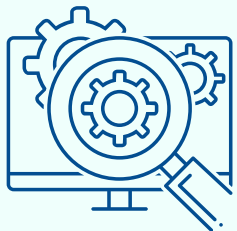
Main achievements in 2022-2023

We are truly proud of what we achieved in 2022-2023. We overcame challenges and took advantage of opportunities, with a real focus on improving our governance and delivery structures, managing our digital services, improving our services, and demonstrating our commitment to safeguarding. This has allowed us to deliver a number of achievements.



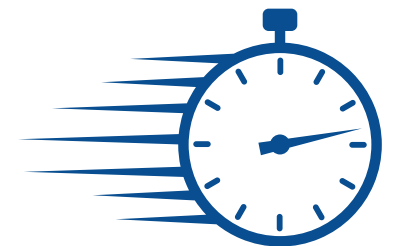
We launched our new 'view your results' service, which allows customers to view their disclosure certificate online. This service also gives employers the information they need to make recruitment decisions quicker.

We provided Scotland with the best disclosure service it has ever had, maintaining a service level of over 97% of applications processed in two weeks and reduced the time it takes to process applications for criminal history checks. We did this by refining processes, eliminating waste and reconfiguring staffing.



We released new functionality (features to complete a set of tasks or actions) into our systems, which enabled faster and more efficient processing of applications. We improved performance, security and safeguarding in our processing systems and improved functionality for staff. We made big strides towards introducing new software which will increase the pace of improvements delivered to the public.

We supported the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, processing over 10,000 applications for hosts. **A Scottish Government spokesperson said: "Disclosure Scotland played a critical role to ensure the safeguarding of displaced Ukrainian people by laying emergency legislation and developing a priority fast track service to ensure hosts in Scotland are appropriately vetted. It is recognised visas are for three years and people will continue to arrive, therefore Disclosure Scotland will continue to play a critical role and with Scottish Government."**



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We strengthened safeguarding by gaining access to the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service portal, enabling better monitoring of the progress of criminal proceedings and quicker processing of information.

“Access to the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service portal has made our processes more efficient. It has allowed us to introduce a ‘smarter’ way of working which supports our critical safeguarding function in removing unsuitable individuals from regulated work with children and vulnerable adults’. It will also allow us to reduce the consideration process and help individuals get into regulated work.” Head of Protection Services, Disclosure Scotland

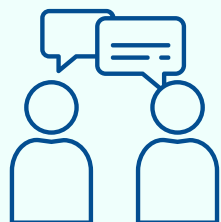
We contributed to the Scottish Government’s commitment to remove potential barriers to recruitment in social care by introducing free disclosure checks for people entering the sector. We have processed over 10,000 applications for these checks.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: “The scheme to waive PVG fees for Social Care workers provided a welcome boost to the sector during a period of unprecedented pressure. Disclosure Scotland played a critical role in delivering this support to staff.”



We created a more inclusive and supportive working environment by introducing an ‘employee passport’ (a record of reasonable adjustments agreed between a worker who is disabled or has a health condition and their manager), allowing everyone to perform at their best regardless of their circumstances.

We increased safeguarding by replacing outdated technology.



We made information more accessible and provided what information our customers need by consulting them on the Code of Practice and providing a webpage, with key points and video guidance, to help customers understand their obligations under the Code the Practice.

“Having a central place where people can go to get immediate information on a specific aspect of the Code of Practice can only be a positive as it is something, as countersignatories (people approved to sign Disclosure applications) we need to be aware of.” Employer using Disclosure Scotland services

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Core objectives



The objectives we will achieve in 2023-2024 will make significant contributions to improving the quality of our services, the technology we use, and our collaboration with stakeholders and our people. We recognise that collaboration is essential for achieving our objectives and so we will continue to promote joint working between our people, other professionals and service users, building on each other’s skills, knowledge, experiences and expertise, which leads to more innovation, efficient processes, improved communication and increased success.

Progress against our objectives will continue to be measured using our agreed measures of success and our key performance indicators. To achieve our vision and deliver year three of DS 25, we have identified the following actions to be completed this year.

Disclose

Strategic aim

To continually search for new ways of working to improve our services through the use of technology, creativity and innovation.

To deliver a modern, proportionate, accessible and easy-to-understand disclosure service in Scotland.

Strategic outcome

People and organisations have the information they need to make safe, fair and inclusive recruitment decisions.

We provide a better service for everyone and develop the services that people need, in partnership with them.

Objective

We will make Scotland's people safer by barring unsuitable people from working with vulnerable people, and providing a quality, effective and efficient disclosure system to support safe recruitment decisions.

What we will do

- Improve and develop new quality-assurance frameworks across our business to continually improve customers’ experiences, streamline processes, and guide our training and development plans.
- Review our management of tasks and identify improvements that can be made to allow managers to make quicker, smarter decisions through improved access to important management information.
- Review our recruitment and resourcing strategy, identifying efficiencies and opportunities to make our service better.

Business Plan 2023-2024

Core objectives

Protect



Strategic aim

To have a stronger safeguarding service that focuses attention on those who work in positions of trust, through mandatory membership of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (the PVG scheme), improved legal powers for ministers and obligations on those who use our services.

To deliver a modern, proportionate, accessible and easy-to-understand disclosure service in Scotland.

Strategic outcome

Communities are safer and vulnerable people are protected from harm.

We provide a better service for everyone and develop the services that people need, in partnership with them.

Objective

We will deliver a comprehensive programme of reforms to make Scotland safer and fairer.

What we will do

- Develop training and guidance materials that are targeted and suited to the needs of our users, by designing them with our stakeholders.
- Engage with stakeholders to understand their needs and guide policy which requires secondary legislation for a time-limited scheme.
- Consult stakeholders and experts about guidance for making decisions on review applications made under Part 1 of the 2020 Disclosure (Scotland) Act.
- Review our approach to managing cases where we are considering barring a person, so that we make justifiable decisions at the earliest opportunity.
- Develop quality assurance and performance frameworks to support continuous learning and improvements in how we investigate potential barring cases and to influence our training and development plans.
- Contribute to the Scottish Government fulfilling its purpose by giving the Scottish ministers advice on policy matters related to Disclosure Scotland.

Business Plan 2023-2024

Core objectives

Promote



Strategic aim

To educate and promote fair and inclusive recruitment in Scotland and help deliver the Scottish Government's rehabilitation plan.

To deliver a modern, proportionate, accessible and easy-to-understand disclosure service in Scotland.

Strategic outcome

People can move on from past mistakes, contribute economically and flourish in society.

We provide a better service for everyone and develop the services that people need, in partnership with them.

Objective

We will use our influence and expertise beyond our organisation to integrate disclosure with wider public initiatives in Scotland, helping the Scottish Government to deliver its national outcomes.

What we will do

- Deliver a communications and engagement strategy to educate stakeholders about our role and make sure that our messages are clear, inclusive and easy to understand.
- Provide training and engagement activities to promote equal opportunity and fair recruitment, with a focus on changing common perceptions of employing people with convictions.
- Improve guidance on current and future services by focusing on the needs of service users.
- Use our Stakeholder Engagement Group to consult on arrangements relating to the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, making it meaningful and user-centred while demonstrating our commitment to improving openness and transparency for the work that we do.
- Engage with partners, experts, customers and other stakeholders to promote our vision, purpose and outcomes.
- Promote our knowledge and expertise beyond our organisation, to support the Scottish Government by contributing to Scotland's National Performance Framework.

Business Plan 2023-2024

Core objectives

Digital



Strategic aim

To continually search for new ways of working, to improve our services through the use of technology, creativity and innovation.

To deliver a modern, proportionate, accessible and easy-to-understand disclosure service in Scotland.

Strategic outcome

People have a say in how the services they need are delivered and improved according to their needs.

We provide a better service for everyone and develop the services that people need, in partnership with them.

Objective

We will continue to improve our digital technologies to improve the stability and availability of our services, with software designed to improve customers' experiences.

What we will do

- Drive forward opportunities to provide more services online while meeting the needs of users.
- Reduce interruptions to our service and increase our resilience (ability to deal with and recover from difficulties), while making improvements to our digital technology and processes to allow more frequent changes to our technology and maximise our processing of applications.
- Create a new website for publishing information on a modernised, accessible and dynamic platform to meet the diverse needs of customers and stakeholders.
- Start using a new and more efficient 'cloud' platform that provides financial efficiency and the ability to deliver change faster to benefit service users.
- Continue to exploit the benefits of innovative technology with partners in the Scottish Government to deliver services such as our groundbreaking online accounts and an improved website.
- Use automation technology to increase productivity, free up staff time for complex activities, and make us more resilient as an organisation.
- Relentlessly pursue a culture of continuous improvement to make sure our staff and service users have the technology they need.

Business Plan 2023-2024

Core objectives

Finance



Strategic aim

To deliver our safeguarding outcomes in a cost-effective and sustainable way.

Strategic outcome

We provide a high-quality service and value for money, strengthening public trust.

Objective

We will innovate to deliver high-quality services in an affordable way, by boosting efficiency and reducing costs to deliver value for public spending.

What we will do

- Provide expert financial advice to projects and activities, to identify areas of strength, share best practice and establish opportunities for continuous improvement across the organisation.
- Continuously review programme and project business cases to make sure our financial controls are effective and our investments demonstrate real benefits for the public.
- Make sure all financial reporting is accurate.
- Provide reliable financial forecasts for budgeting and decision making, making sure the forecasts are regularly reviewed and updated as information becomes available.
- Help with savings exercises, providing advice and support where savings need to be made.

Business Plan 2023-2024

Core objectives

People



Strategic aim

To invest in our people, who deliver all that we do, so that they can work in a way that shows fairness, kindness and compassion in equal measure and help create a culture that values collaboration and joint responsibility for our goals and ambitions across the organisation.

Strategic outcome

We support new ideas and new ways of working, and make sure we have the skills we need to successfully achieve the aims and outcomes of DS 25.

Objective

We will invest in the development of our people, to produce a talented, diverse and inclusive workforce that can enable us to deliver our disclosure and safeguarding outcomes.

What we will do

- Follow a one-year action plan to drive employee engagement, productivity and retention.
- Roll out workforce planning toolkits (including templates, processes, and procedures) to enable managers to create team plans to help us achieve our strategic aims.
- Carry out a skills audit (identifying existing skills in the organisation and those which we need to achieve our aims) to influence an organisational development programme that supports the continuous development of our people and helps us plan future staffing needs.
- Improve our induction programme with better guidance and support for managers and staff to help them settle into the organisation and make sure they have the knowledge and support they need to perform their role.
- Review all health and safety processes and procedures, showing our commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment for our people.
- Focus on areas of the People Survey where potential improvements have been identified and develop an action plan detailing the steps we will take to improve.

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Measuring success

Our people

The success of our aims and objectives is measured in the engagement of our people (their connection with and involvement in their work, team and organisation). Engagement will be measured through the annual People Survey, our People Strategy and evaluation of our internal communications and engagement channels.

The board

The Disclosure Scotland Board will keep the business plan under regular review, and advise our Chief Executive on any changes that may be needed because of changing priorities or risks. We have strong governance in place, through our board, committees and leadership team, to make sure we focus on delivering the priorities in the plan.

Programme boards

The three programme boards are chaired by a director who oversees a programme of projects.

The programme boards provide input to decisions affecting the programme or projects. They will support the Senior Responsible Owner in making decisions and in monitoring and challenging issues affecting the progress of the programme or project.

Balanced scorecard











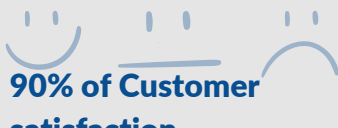







We will use a performance-management tool called 'Balanced scorecard' to keep track of performance and provide evidence for decisions to be based on.

Annual report and accounts

The auditor's statement in our annual report will report specific matters arising from the audit of the financial statements.

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Key performance indicators

Disclose	 <p>95% of Customer Contact Centre calls answered</p>	<p>90% of Disclosure certificates issued within 14 calendar days</p> 	<p>4.5 minutes average call handling time</p> 	<p>90% of emails received at DS Response actioned within five working days</p> 	
Protect	<p>95% of notification of consideration for listing letters issued within four working days</p> 	<p>98% notifications of barring decisions issued within three working days</p>	<p>95% automatic listing cases completed in five days</p> 		
Promote	<p>5% increase of number of Social Media followers Twitter Facebook LinkedIn</p> 	<p>33% increase of stakeholder reach</p> 	<p>more than 95% of complaints resolved at Stage 1 within five days</p> 		
Digital	<p>Maintain or increase percentage of digital uptake</p> 	<p>Maintain or increase the total digital applications completed online</p>	<p>90% of Customer satisfaction</p> 	<p>99.95% of customer service availability</p> 	<p>99.8% of business service availability</p> 
Finance	<p>100% of invoices paid within 10 days</p> 	<p>Less than 10% of budget variance</p> 	<p>Less than 5% of debt older than 60 days</p> 		
People	<p>68% staff engagement index</p> 	<p>Maximum 10 average days working lost</p> 	<p>6% staff attrition rate</p> 