



NATIONAL SECURITY VETTING STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

NATIONAL SECURITY VETTING STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)			
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PORTFOLIO	Deputy Chief Constable		
OWNER	Head of Professional Standards Department		
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THIS POLICY REPLACES:	This is an amendment to the previous national security SOP (SOP/068/07)		
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1.2	September 2010	Revision of ACPO Vetting Policy	Gary Williams, Force Vetting Officer, PSD.



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NATIONAL SECURITY VETTING STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This procedure enforces and is subject to the conditions of the Vetting Policy (Policy/247/10).
- 1.2 The purpose of National Security Vetting (NSV) is to protect sensitive government national security information, by providing an acceptable level of assurance as to the integrity of individuals who have access to protectively marked government assets and/or who require access to persons, sites and materials, at risk of terrorist attack.
- 1.3 This procedure outlines the roles, responsibilities and requirements through to decision making, storage and disposal of NSV records.
- 1.4 This procedure applies to England, Wales and Scotland.
- 1.5 This procedure applies to all BTP employees, Community Volunteers, members of other agencies and those acting as our servants or agents.

2 KNOWLEDGE

2.1 Terms and Definitions

- 2.1.1 Recruitment Vetting – this is the process undertaken by the Vetting Unit on recruitment of all personnel. ([See Recruitment Vetting SOP](#))
- 2.1.2 NSV includes Counter Terrorist Checks, Security Clearance and Developed Vetting.
Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) – this is a requirement for all personnel whose work involves proximity to public figures who are assessed to be a particular risk from terrorist attack, or who have access to premises, information or material assessed to be of value to terrorists. Clearance on its own does not allow access to, knowledge or custody of protectively marked government or police assets/data.



Security Clearance (SC) – this is a requirement for all personnel who require long term, frequent and uncontrolled access to SECRET government assets and occasional access to TOP SECRET.

An SC clearance is required for those individuals who are to be appointed to posts which:

- require long term, frequent and uncontrolled access to government assets marked SECRET;
- require occasional, supervised access to government assets marked TOP SECRET (such as Chief Constable's Staff Officer and those in Special Branch); and for individuals who:
 - while not in such posts, will be in a position to directly or indirectly bring about the same degree of damage;
 - will have sufficient knowledge to obtain a comprehensive picture of a SECRET plan, policy or project;
 - are being considered for appointment where it would not be possible to make reasonable career progress without security clearance for access to government assets marked SECRET;
 - need access to certain levels of protectively marked material originating from another country or international organisation

An SC clearance **should not normally** be required for:

- Occasional access to government assets marked SECRET in the normal course of business or during conferences, briefings or courses;
- custody of a small quantity of government assets marked SECRET;
- entry to an area where government assets marked SECRET are stored;
- work in areas where government information at SECRET and TOP SECRET might be overheard;
- use of equipment capable of handling government information marked SECRET, provided that access controls are in place.



- In the above circumstances, Baseline Vetting is sufficient.

Developed Vetting (DV) – this is a requirement for all personnel who require long term, frequent and uncontrolled access of TOP SECRET government assets/data. It will allow regular access to TOP SECRET police assets/data.

2.1.3 Non Police Personnel – these are persons working with BTP who are not recruited as Police employees.

2.2 Responsibilities

2.2.1 The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) is responsible for the success of the vetting process and ensuring the allocation of resources and promoting these procedures throughout BTP.

2.2.2 The Force Vetting Officer (FVO) is responsible for establishing vetting policies, procedures and standards for BTP and implementing processes in line with ACPO National Vetting Policy for the Police Community.

2.2.3 Departmental Heads and Area Commanders are responsible for ensuring that all staff that have responsibility for recruitment (including non police personnel) follow established policies, procedures and standards before allowing anyone access to BTP premises or information. They should report any non compliance with policies and procedures to the FVO.

3 PROCEDURES

3.1 Who is subject to National Security Vetting?

3.1.1 A list of those posts subject to NSV is available in Designated Posts and Clearance Levels - Criteria and Process (see Associated Documents).

3.1.2 A breakdown of all personnel subject to NSV is held in confidence by the FVO.

3.2 Criteria for National Security Vetting

3.2.1 Foreign nationality is not an automatic bar to granting NSV, however, persons must have resided in the UK for a reasonable period for meaningful checks to be carried out.

The following minimum periods apply:

- Counter Terrorist Check – 3 years
- Security Check – 5 years
- Development Vetting – 10 years

3.3 How does National Security Vetting work?

3.3.1 Vetting will be completed before persons identified at 3.1 are allowed access to assets and roles outlined above.

3.3.2 Baseline Vetting/Management Vetting must have been completed prior to NSV process being undertaken (See [Recruitment Vetting SOP](#) and [Management Vetting SOP](#)).

3.3.3 **CTC** - applicants will complete NSV Questionnaire. This will be forwarded to the appropriate Vetting Officer (VO) who will then process this form to the Security Services.

3.3.4 **SC** - applicants will complete NSV Questionnaire. This will be forwarded to the appropriate VO who will then send/process this form to the Security Services. It should be noted that those staff requiring vetting to this level should be vetted to Management Vetting Level before SC.

3.3.5 **DV** - applicants will complete NSV Questionnaire together with a financial questionnaire. This will be forwarded to the appropriate VO who will then send/process this form to the Security Services.

3.4 Notification

3.4.1 Once a decision has been received from the Security Services the HR Business

Centre will be notified in writing using a Clearance Certificate. The certificate should be retained on the individuals personnel file.

3.5 Requests for review of decisions to refuse National Security Vetting

3.5.1 **CTC** – Existing staff who are refused CTC clearance, have a right of appeal within BTP to the DCC, and finally to the independent Security Vetting Appeals Panel (SVAP) full details of which are held by the FVO.

3.5.2 **SC** – Existing staff who are refused SC clearance, have a right of appeal within BTP to a nominated officer of ACPO Rank, and finally to the independent SVAP.

3.5.3 **DV** – Appeals by existing staff against a decision by the nominated ACPO officer to grant DV Clearance are heard, initially, by the Chief Officer and, finally, by the SVAP.

3.5.4 The SVAP process is not available to applicants for recruitment to the police community. Therefore, if an individual fails the CTC, SC or DV process at the recruitment stage they have no right of appeal.

3.6 Reporting Changes

3.6.1 Changes of personal circumstances of individuals holding CTC, SC and DV clearance may impact upon their continued suitability to hold that clearance. They must therefore report any relevant changes, including spouses or partners, changes of address, financial difficulties, criminal associations, or other matters. Notification of changes will be made in writing to the FVO using a Change of Personal Circumstances Questionnaire (028-2204) these are held by Vetting Officers.

3.7 Renewal/Review of National Security Vetting

3.7.1 As vetting is not a “one off” process, successful candidates will have their NSV review dependant on the level of clearance.



3.7.2 The review will be undertaken as follows:

- CTC clearance will be reviewed every 10 years,
- SC clearance will be reviewed every 10 years.
- DV clearance will be reviewed initially at the 5 year stage and then at least every 7 years.

3.7.3 Clearances may be reviewed at any time if adverse information comes to light relating to individuals, or where there are material changes in individuals' circumstances.

3.7.4 Individuals holding an SC clearance who transfer to a non-SC post will retain their SC status for 5 years from the clearance date, before the clearance lapses. When a person transfers to another organisation that requires a SC clearance, there must not have been more than 1 year between leaving one organisation and joining another. In addition the individual must not have resided overseas for more than 6 months. If these circumstances apply, the SC clearance must be renewed.

3.8 Retention of National Security Vetting Records

3.8.1 All papers obtained during the course of the vetting enquiries that are utilised in the decision making process are held securely in the appropriate Vetting Unit. These should be held for the following periods:

- 6 years after the individual has retired at the normal retirement age.
- If the individual leaves or retires before the normal retirement age, documents should be held for 10 years.
- If the individual leaves or retires within the 5 years leading up to normal retirement age, records should only be held for a period of 5 years after the normal retirement age. For example, an employee leaves or retires at the age of 63. Normal retirement age would be 65; therefore records should only be kept for 7 years (ie 5 years after the normal retirement age).

3.8.2 Security questionnaires are important documents in relation to vetting and could constitute important evidence in the event of any subsequent legal action connected with security clearance. Therefore questionnaires should be kept for the following minimum periods (from the date of clearance):

- 6 months, where any security clearance is approved and an offer of appointment has been made, but the candidate has not taken up employment,
- 6 months for routine SC clearances, where the individual is employed,
- 3 years, for any level of security clearance where applicants were refused security clearance and as a result were not employed.

4 MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

4.1 This SOP and Vetting Policy will be monitored by the FVO to ensure compliance with National Guidelines issued by ACPO Professional Standards in relation to Vetting.

4.2 The FVO will conduct checks against Area Establishment Lists to ensure that all personnel have been correctly vetted to the appropriate level and will review NSV holdings.

5 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

5.1 Personal Information Questionnaire - Baseline

5.2 Vetting Verification Record.

5.3 Non Police Personal Information Questionnaire Level 2 and 3

5.4 [Recruitment Vetting SOP.](#)

5.5 [Management Vetting and Enhanced Management Vetting SOP.](#)

5.6 [Conviction, Caution and Financial Criteria SOP.](#)

5.7 Transfer of Police Officers within the Police Community.