Vetting

Policy

Policy summary

Members of the public are entitled to expect that police forces will recruit people who demonstrate the highest standards of professional conduct, honesty and integrity.

Vetting provides a degree of assurance as to the integrity, reliability and trustworthiness of those who have wider access to West Yorkshire Police premises or other assets including criminal intelligence, financial and operational assets. This includes information held on computer databases and in any other form.

All employees, as well as those working on or visiting Force premises, will be subject to police vetting checks at the appropriate level for the role they will be performing.

Aim

The aims of this policy procedure are to:

- ensure the Force has a fair and consistent vetting process;
- prevent the recruitment or employment of people with convictions, cautions and judicial or other formal disposals which may call in to question the integrity of the employee or the service;
- ensure the integrity of people working for and with the Force is beyond reasonable doubt; and
- protect those who work for and with the Force from pressure from criminals and others to disclose information.

Scope

This policy procedure applies to all police officers, police staff, special constables, police community support officers, contractors, agency workers, partners, volunteers and third party suppliers.

There are no national guidelines in respect of police staff recruitment. However, due to the increasingly wide range of duties carried out by police staff, the following vetting procedure has been extended to include people applying for police staff vacancies.

Throughout this document the term ‘employee’ is used to reflect the above groups and should be read in that context.

Compliance

Police Reform Act 2002
Freedom of Information Act 2000
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Data Protection Act 1998
Human Rights Act 1998
Official Secrets Act 1989
Crime and Disorder Act 1988
Rehabilitation of Offender’s Act (Exceptions) Order 1975

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974  
Home Office Circular 54/2003 Police recruitment, revised eligibility criteria  
Her Majesty’s Government Baseline Personnel Security Standard  
ACPO National vetting policy (NVP) for the police community  
ACPO Professional Standards Committee Standard Operating Procedure on Authentication

Further information

Further information is available from the Force Vetting Unit (FVU) or divisional or departmental Finance and Business Support Managers (nominated sponsors).

General principles

Introduction

Vetting clearance is:

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<th>Action</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>a prerequisite of employment and applicants who refuse to undergo the procedure will not be considered for appointment;</td>
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| 2    | a prerequisite of access to sensitive police or government assets.  

All employees must expect to be the subject of particular scrutiny. These high standards are also expected of non police personnel, e.g. interpreters; |
| 3    | required by existing employees in order to allow the Force to check their suitability.  

Those who refuse to comply or are unable to comply will be subject to review, which may result in disciplinary action.  

If employees are unable to furnish the information required for genuine reasons, the Force Vetting Officer (FVO) will assess whether the vetting process can be properly satisfied.  

Existing employees will be permitted to remain in designated posts while vetting is carried out. Those who do not wish to be vetted will not be required to do so but will not be permitted to continue working in designated posts; and |
| 4    | not necessary for persons who are admitted to police premises if they:  
• remain under constant supervision; and  
• do not have access to Force computer systems or protectively marked material. |
Management advice

If vetting information is not provided or vetting clearance is not obtained, advice will be sought from:
- Quality and Standards Section, Corporate Support Department, for police officers; and
- Human Resource (HR) managers for police staff.

Investigation into failure to obtain vetting clearance

Those employees who are not cleared by the FVU for their current role will be investigated and may be:
- moved to a role which requires a lower level of vetting (if available and provided that they can gain vetting clearance at the lower level);
- subject to discipline procedures if the vetting process identifies issues that the employee should have disclosed to the Force earlier; or
- dismissed.

Pending the outcome of investigations the employee should be moved temporarily to appropriate duties based on a risk assessment and advice from the FVU.

Dispensing with services

In extreme cases, it may be necessary to dispense with the services of a member of police staff on security grounds. This decision will only be made at ACPO level and following consultation with the relevant Trade Union.

Clearance decision

The FVO is responsible for making the vetting clearance decision based on the information contained in the:
- Personnel Security Section of HM Government’s Security policy framework; and
- convictions and cautions criteria contained in Standard Operating Procedure 8 of the NVP.

The FVO will assess all available information and decide whether to approve, limit, refuse or withdraw clearance for an employee.

Confidentiality

Information provided by employees for vetting purposes is personal and sensitive and will be kept confidential at all times. However, no immunity can be granted in respect of criminal or disciplinary matters revealed. In such cases information contained within the vetting questionnaires may be disclosed in any subsequent proceedings.

All material obtained during vetting enquiries will be retained in secure IT systems or held securely within the FVU and separate from the employee’s personal file.
**Need to know**

Even if an employee has appropriate vetting clearance, they should still be denied access to sensitive government or police assets if they do not need to know about the subject matter.

The distribution of assets should be no wider than is necessary to ensure police business is conducted efficiently.

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**Opportunities for blackmail**

All employees must ensure that their behaviour, at all times, does not bring disrepute, or provide opportunities for unscrupulous individuals to blackmail them with a view to obtaining sensitive information or intelligence. Should an employee believe that aspects of their personal life could make them vulnerable to blackmail, they should raise the matter with the FVO at the earliest opportunity.

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**Breaches of Official Secrets Act**

Employees commit offences under the Official Secrets Act if they are entrusted with sensitive documents or articles and fail to:

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<td>1</td>
<td>deal with them in a manner specified in their official duties;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>take care to prevent their unauthorised disclosure; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>adequately vet people before allowing access to them.</td>
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Admin  

Last reviewed: December 2011  
Scheduled for review: December 2013