THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Central Vetting Unit

What is vetting?

Vetting assists with identifying individuals who are unsuitable to work in the police service or have access to police assets. This includes people who:

- Are unsuitable through criminal activity or association.
- Pose a risk to the public and to those who are particularly vulnerable.
- Have a demonstrable lack of honesty.
- Have previously behaved in a manner that is inconsistent with the standards of professional behaviour.
- Are financially vulnerable.
- Lack the necessary maturity or self-control even if their integrity is not in question.

Why do we do vetting?

The public are entitled to a police force that they can trust, where the employees are:

- Open
- Honest
- Fair
- Objective
- Accountable
- Act in the public interest
- Demonstrate integrity
- Lead by examples

These elements are covered by the Code of Ethics and vetting expects all employees to comply with these principles in order to ensure that only those with the highest standards of honesty and integrity are employed, and in order to protect:

- Equipment
- Assets
- Police Information
- Estates and Infrastructure

Vetting helps reassure the public that appropriate checks are conducted on individuals in positions of trust. It also identifies areas of vulnerability which could damage public confidence in Thames Valley Police or the wider police service.

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Who requires police vetting?

- Police officers
- Police staff
- Special constables
- Temporary staff
- Partnership workers
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Anyone who requires access to Police information, sites or assets

What does vetting entail?

- Checks on applicants
  - Identity verification
  - Police data
  - Financial data
  - Address checks
  - Open source/social media
  - Character references
- Checks on family
- Checks on co-residents
- Checks on associates

Previous convictions/cautions?

The presence of a previous conviction/caution will not automatically lead to a vetting refusal.

Each case will be looked at on a case by case basis. Elements taken into consideration include:

- Type and seriousness of conviction/caution
- Age of the applicant at the time of the conviction/ caution
- Time elapsed since the conviction/caution
- Whether the conviction/caution is a standalone incident or whether there is an indication of a pattern of behaviour

Residency Criteria

For the purposes of police vetting, the following residency requirements apply:

- Non-Police personnel vetting - three years
- Recruitment vetting - three years
- Management vetting - five years

The residency criteria ensures that applicants have a checkable history in the UK. This allows for meaningful vetting enquiries.
You may be asked to provide a certificate of good
conduct from any country you have spent 3 months or more in.

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Financial situation and vetting

From experience, poor financial history can potentially cause an applicant to become vulnerable and more susceptible to corruption. If an applicant has experienced unmanageable debt (i.e. loan agreements have not been maintained), vetting can be considered if evidence can be provided that steps have been put in place to manage future payments.

Clearance is unlikely to be granted if an applicant has:

- a current Country Court Judgement (CCJ)
- been subjected to bankruptcy or a Debt Relief Order (DRO) which has only been satisfied within the last 3 years

If you are unsure of your current credit situation, you can request your credit report through a number of websites.

Family and Associates

Applicants must be open and honest about any knowledge they may have around family and associates' negative police contact/potential suspected criminal activity.

3rd party information cannot be disclosed to applicants. Only information already known about family and associates can be discussed with an applicant. This may be required if risks have been identified and it is considered this approach will assist in managing the risk.

In some circumstances, an association may be assessed as a high risk, and even if a disclosure has been made, it may not be appropriate to grant vetting clearance to the applicant.

TOP TIPS

- **Always be honest** - if you're not sure if you should disclose something, then it is better that you do, rather than vetting to have concerns over your honesty. Knowingly providing false information on a vetting form or during any subsequent conversation/interview could be regarded as evidence of unreliability and/or dishonesty. As a consequence, your clearance could be declined, even though what you were seeking to conceal would not itself have caused a problem. The vetting process is confidential.
- **Take your time** - read the questions fully and think about your answers. All the information being asked is essential for the vetting process. If you cannot provide the correct details, you must explain the reason for not being able to provide these. Make sure you double check your forms before sending.
- **Declare all of your police contact** - not declaring any previous convictions, police contact, criminal associates, providing false, misleading information or omitting any significant information from the vetting forms could lead to vetting being declined. You may be contacted directly by the vetting department to discuss your declarations, this is a standard procedure and not something to worry about. Speak openly to your case officer, or request for them to call you back at a more convenient time.
- **Proof of identity** - if you are invited to a recruitment interview, make sure you bring the required identity documents and proof of address, and that they are within date (utility bills must be dated within the last 6 months).

What happens next?

If clearance is granted, your vetting sponsor will facilitate a start date for you.

You will be expected to inform vetting of any changes in your circumstances even after clearance has been provided.

If vetting clearance has not been granted and the decision is to decline clearance, this decision will be communicated directly to the applicant by the vetting unit, the vetting sponsor will also be informed separately.