Vetting – Working for

THAMES VALLEY POLICE

WHAT IS VETTING?

Everyone in the police service must maintain high ethical and professional standards and act with the utmost integrity. This is crucial in ensuring that public confidence in the service is maintained.

Vetting is:-

- a process that helps the police to decide who to recruit and who to give access to sensitive information, estates and assets
- a process to safeguard the police, by ensuring we only employ those
  - ✓ With proven integrity
  - ✓ Who are not vulnerable to pressure from others to disclose information
  - ✓ Who are unlikely to bring embarrassment or discredit the police service
- a process to protect the individual who is being vetted

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
- ✓ Act in the public interest
- ✓ Demonstrate integrity
- ✓ Lead by examples
- ✓ Accountable

These elements are covered by the Code of Ethics and vetting expect 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 & 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 a force or the wider police service.

WHO REQUIRES POLICE VETTING?

- Police officers
- Police staff
- Special Constables
- Temporary staff
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Partnership workers

Anyone who requires access to our 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 or 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

Applicants are required to meet a minimum UK residency period of a combined period of at least 12 months in the last 3 years. This to enable meaningful vetting checks to be carried out to in line with national standards.

The term residency applies to any time spent in the UK, either living, visiting, travelling or working.

You will be asked to provide a certificate of good conduct from any country you have spent more than 28 days residency in, over the last 3 years.

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 County Court Judgment (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 & 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 that 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 or concealing 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 refused, 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 or criminal associates/or providing false or misleading information or omitting any significant information from the vetting forms could lead to a refusal.

  You may be contacted directly by the vetting department to discuss your declarations, this is 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 you are refused, you will be advised of the appeal process by your vetting sponsor.