

Supporting Colleagues Going Through Security Clearance



United Kingdom
Security Vetting

This document offers some guidance and a range of certified information which can help you support colleagues who are going through a security clearance.

Vetting establishes trust between employers and their staff for roles where National Security concerns are a consideration. It is a thorough check of an applicant's life, which can be lengthy and at times may feel intrusive, with long periods where nothing is heard whilst work happens in the background, but it is a crucial National Security process.

It can be difficult to know how best to support those colleagues who are going through the security clearance process and it is often tempting to share your own experiences; by doing this you can run the risk of providing outdated information and personal anecdotes and views which can offer a narrow lens, which end up being counterproductive.

Before exchanging any information with a colleague undergoing a security clearance, make sure you are up to date with the latest information about vetting.

Checklist

- Go to our [Vetting Explained](#) page and share this with your colleague who is undergoing clearance. The information found here covers; what vetting is, what individuals will be asked for, and a brief rationale.
- Visit [UKSV guidance](#) to security clearance levels. This link provides the latest information about security clearance levels, the level of access granted by each clearance level, and the checks that are involved. This can help ease anxiety and worries allowing your colleague to be better prepared for what to expect.
- Visit the [UKSV Homepage](#) on Gov.uk for the latest information and updates from UKSV.



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UKSV have created some [demystifying vetting videos](#) to help support those thinking about/undergoing the clearance process.

The videos cover the following topics:

- [Vetting: An Overview](#)
- [Ethnicity](#)
- [Finances](#)
- [Internet Use](#)
- [Life Experiences](#)
- [Sexuality and Gender Identity](#)
- [Nationality and Travel](#)
- [Physical and Mental Health](#)

Top Tips for Line Managers

- ⇒ **Encourage colleagues to ask questions** during their interview, their Vetting Officer can answer any questions they may have
- ⇒ **Share the latest materials** provided by UKSV
- ⇒ **Encourage colleagues to voice any concerns or uncertainties** throughout the process to their Sponsor or direct to UKSV via the UKSV helpdesk at uksv-helpdesk@cabinetoffice.gov.uk
- ⇒ **Contact the UKSV Helpdesk** for further support and consultation
- ⇒ **Encourage** honesty and integrity throughout
- ⇒ **Don't encourage colleagues to hide information** that you think might be compromising
- ⇒ **Contact uksv-culture@cabinetoffice.gov.uk** should you have queries regarding the inclusivity of vetting or if you wish to have a demystifying session delivered to your department
- ⇒ **Avoid sharing stories about other people's vetting experiences** (particularly those who have undergone the process many years ago). Whilst this may seem helpful often it causes greater anxiety in applicants and serves to spread misconceptions
- ⇒ **Do not give colleagues an estimated timeframe** on how long it will take to receive clearance. Each case is different and as such timescales vary



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Top Tips for Colleagues

If a colleague is undertaking an interview as part of the security clearance process then you may want to pass on the following tips:

- ⇒ **Let your Vetting Officer know your communication preferences** - We recommend a Vetting Officer's first contact with you is a telephone call, however this may not suit you so let them know your preference
- ⇒ **You are the expert in your life and circumstances** - Be confident and honest about your experiences and learnings
- ⇒ **If you feel uncomfortable at any point, let your Vetting Officer know** - Speaking up allows your Vetting Officer know what's happening and you can then work together
- ⇒ **If you don't understand a question ask your Vetting Officer to explain** - *i.e. "I'm feeling unsure about the reason behind this question and I'm wondering if you could explain it to me a little more?"*
- ⇒ **Ask for a break if you need one** - It is important to feel comfortable and take the interview at a pace that suits you both
- ⇒ **Correct your Vetting Officer on terminology or language** - We give our staff training to keep them updated with terminology, but it is not one size fits all. Speak up and explain *i.e. "I just want to let you know that when you say It leaves me feeling like..... as it's not a term I use. I would feel more comfortable if you said instead"*
- ⇒ **Give feedback on your experience, good and bad.** When we receive feedback, we are able to know what we need to do to improve and what things to keep doing. It is important for us to maintain a well-balanced process and to keep the organisation growing in the best direction

Once the interview has been completed it is normal for there to be a prolonged period of silence whilst work is taking place in the background. This is not something to be alarmed by as it is a standard practice. Due to our current limitations we are unable to provide status updates.

Other useful links

- Complaints - [Complaints procedures](#), uksv-complaints@cabinetoffice.gov.uk
- Guidance on using the vetting portal—[Portal Guidance](#)
- Guidance for Applicants - [Applicant Guidance](#)
- National Security Vetting [Privacy Notice](#)

