

# Working in vetting

Published on 20 December 2025 Written by Lauren Smith, Vetting Co-ordinator, Gloucestershire Constabulary

Spotlight on: working as part of a vetting team

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It's time we introduced ourselves and opened the doors to the world of vetting. I'm a vetting co-ordinator for Gloucestershire Constabulary. I work alongside a team of vetting analysts, plus a senior vetting analyst.

Vetting checks are a mandatory legal requirement, governed by the [\*\*Vetting Code of Practice\*\*](#) and the [\*\*Police \(Vetting\) Regulations 2025\*\*](#). These background checks are designed to uphold the integrity of the force.

We're responsible for processing and completing:

- applications
- decisions
- renewals
- reviews
- upgrades

We aim to be efficient, professionally inquisitive and, above all, fair.

I wanted to join this team to do something positive in my working life, to help make a difference. I applied for vetting as the department is critical in assessing whether an individual is suitable to work in the police service, especially given the sensitive information, authority and public trust involved.

Each role of the team is appointed to ensure that officers and staff are honest, law-abiding and trustworthy, reducing the risk of corruption and abuse of power. Vetting considers criminal associations, financial pressures and whether an individual might be at risk of blackmail or compromise. The responsibility on each member of the team is extensive and continues even after a clearance is granted or declined.

# Meet the team

## Vetting co-ordinator

As the team's vetting co-ordinator, I am responsible for tasks such as:

- sending the annual integrity and vetting reviews
- checking and sending clearance renewals and review forms
- approving requested forms
- staffing our main force vetting inbox

We appreciate the pressures everyone is under and the crucial deadlines we're all required to meet. This has allowed me to communicate with many officers and members of staff throughout the force, as well as new applicants. This is always a positive for me, as it provides me with an opportunity to reassure people and attempt to change any negative views towards vetting.

When you hear, "I don't even know where vetting are based", or "vetting are the team who are heard but never seen", this highlights a barrier. This is especially true if the only time you hear from us is because we're sending you a form to complete.

## Vetting analysts and senior analyst

Our vetting analysts and senior vetting analyst are the guardians of the force, who work tirelessly so each department has their new team members. Again, we know how important this is in providing all areas with the resource they require.

The numerous checks and areas that each analyst must complete for every individual is crucial. These checks confirm that the applicant is suitable to hold the required level of clearance. This is why it's paramount to cover all bases with every applicant, so no stone is left unturned.

There's an assumption that vetting teams only do a Police National Computer (PNC) check on the primary applicant, which could not be further from the truth. On average, there are 20 to 25 checks required for each applicant.

If that does not sound daunting, these also need to be completed on every change of surname, every change of address and every person disclosed on the application. That includes partners, siblings, co-residents and so on. I have lost count now!

Our analysts note every detail, question all discrepancies and provide applicants with the opportunity to provide further explanations through interviews and discussions. This is a huge testament to the work they do, which only scratches the surface of their role.

## How we make decisions

Decisions made around vetting are rationalised through reference to the [vetting authorised professional practice](#) (APP), which provides information on the national vetting standards applied by police forces in England and Wales. The APP has been developed to support the consistent application of vetting procedures. This sets the vetting standards, providing guidance and support to ensure consistency throughout our processes.

The pressures to make vetting decisions with competing demands and priorities is challenging, but every decision must be the right one. Public trust and confidence is at the forefront of our decisions, which is why a declined clearance is never a rash decision.

An example of this is highlighted when going through vetting clearance renewals, whereby the checks are redone to ensure there is nothing of concern since the previous vetting was concluded. If any risks are identified, such as inappropriate activity on social media, we then work alongside professional standards and the anti-corruption unit to assist with the final outcome.

Vetting checks often identify risks to the public, the force or the applicant themselves. We have a duty and moral obligation to reduce these risks. An example could be identifying that an applicant has an associate, such as a partner, who may pose a risk to them or their family. If appropriate, we would apply to our counterparts and request that a disclosure to the applicant is made under Sarah's Law or Clare's Law. This protects the applicant's welfare and safety, as well as the force.

We understand that vetting can be associated with anxiety and concern whenever you hear from us, which we would like to change for the better. Throughout the force, we're a hardworking, dedicated and passionate team, who are always willing to listen and help as best as we can. Our

main aim is to keep everyone in force and the public safe, which we strive to achieve every day. With our force vetting manager at the helm, our ambition is to be gold standard.

## What it takes

Being part of the team and experiencing the day-to-day life and training firsthand has been a powerful eye-opener. Some vital skills required for a role in the vetting team include:

- paying close attention and recording significant details
- raising concerns when necessary
- adapting to challenging situations and conversations
- making decisions that have a direct impact on the individuals we support

Please do not fear vetting, we want to build better relationships and rapport across the force. I hope this brief glimpse into our world highlights that we too are human, navigating expectations, workloads, priorities and deadlines.

We understand how these long waits can feel, for both internal and external applicants (remember, we were vetted once too), but hopefully this helps to explain vetting in a bit more detail and how important it is to get it right.

- This article was peer reviewed by Ruby Bell, Vetting Supervisor, Durham Constabulary

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