

National Accreditation Standards

This document provides a step by step outline of the process of Political Party Conference accreditation. It details the different groups who submit to a formal accreditation process and the role of the Political Parties, Workforce and Security providers, and the National Accreditation Team (NAT). It will document the minimum levels of check undertaken and the outcomes available.

This process is agreed by the Home Office and by the Party Conference Policing Group (PCPG) who provide the overall governance of the NAT.

This document is available to the public and is published on the NAT/Greater Manchester Police (GMP) website.

Overview

It was decided by the PCPG that a national accreditation team should be formed to be a single point of interface between the police service and the political parties with respect to accreditation for the annual Political Party Conferences of both the Conservative and Labour Party (the Party Conferences) and undertake to (i) identity verification; and (ii) initial police security checks as part of the accreditation process for the Party Conferences, irrespective of where these are held.

The NAT presently sits within Greater Manchester Police (GMP).

The NAT has delegated authority from the Chief Constables of the police forces in whose police areas the Party Conferences are being held (the host force) to approve accreditation applications in certain situations. NAT does not have the power to refuse accreditation applications, only to refer applications to the host force for further consideration. The host force considers applications referred to it by NAT and decides whether to approve or refuse accreditation. The host force's decision is communicated to the NAT, which communicates the host force's decision to the relevant Political Party.

The Political Party is not obliged to accept the police decision accreditation. Where the Political Party accepts the police decision to approve an accreditation application, the applicant is issued with a conference pass which entitles them to enter the "secure zone" of the Party Conference. Admission to the secure zone is controlled by the Political Party, usually with the assistance of contracted security staff.

Accreditation is provided to party members, contractors, exhibitors, media, workforce and security staff. In 2019, applications for accreditation totalled approximately 75,495. Each individual who applies to attend or work at a Party Conference is required to submit to the accreditation process. The type of accreditation will depend on both their role at the Party Conference and their attendance history.

The data provided and checks carried out are held on the Multi-Conference Accreditation System History (mCash) database for 5 years, and are available to the NAT as a validation tool.

Process

1. Submission of Data

Applications for accreditation to attend a Party Conference are submitted to NAT via the electronic Conference Accreditation System (CAS). There are three ways this is done:

Political Parties

These submissions include applications by party members, media personnel, exhibitors and contractors. Each individual will complete an application form on the respective political party's website and submit it, together with a passport style photograph, via a link on the site directly into the CAS where the NAT will carry out identity verification and initial police security checks. (This does not include checks on social media and open source material).

The decision as to whether to allow or refuse an application to attend a Party Conference rests with the relevant political parties. The political parties issue the conference passes that allow the applicant to enter the Party Conference's "secure zone".

The political parties have their own eligibility rules for attendance at their Party Conferences. It is the responsibility of the respective political parties to undertake their own due diligence checks (internal checks and any open source information) to ensure the applicant is a bona fide, fit and proper person to attend their Party Conference and meets their eligibility rules **before** the application is submitted to NAT. These checks will include, for instance, checking that the applicant holds any required membership of the political party or other organisation deemed suitable to the political party and has paid any required fee.

The applicant or their representative or guardian must personally complete the application. At all times the applicant remains responsible for ensuring current and accurate details are submitted. There are a limited number of exceptions to the requirement to personally complete the application, including:

- Serving Members of:
 - The House of Commons
 - The House of Lords
 - The European and Scottish Parliaments
 - The Welsh Assembly
 - The Northern Ireland Assembly
- Members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) – Labour
- The Conference Arrangements Committee – Labour

Workforce and Security Staff

The Party Conferences are supported by a significant number of staff providing, for instance, hotel, catering, technical and security services. It is the responsibility of the nominated individual(s) in the respective organisations employing those staff to input their employees' details onto the Conference Accreditation Portal (CAP) for submission to the NAT. CAP is a secure web based portal managed by the NAT. Access is limited to nominated individual(s) in each organisation and is via a username and password. They must ensure they have verified that the employee's details are correct before submitting them, together with a passport style photograph. The data will then feed directly into CAS where the NAT will carry out identity verification and initial police security screening.

Accreditation for HMG vetted personnel

Members of organisations which operate a recognised HMG vetting procedure are required to submit to identity verification, but not to police security checks. These include all blue light services and military personnel. Their details are submitted via their organisations onto the CAP.

2. Processing Applications

Political Party

Auto Approvals

A delegate who has attended Conference within the previous two years will be fast tracked into auto approved by the NAT. This will include identity verification based on a physical check of the application to ensure all the nominal details, including the photograph, are correct and a true likeness. If there are any inconsistencies the application will be subject to the full accreditation process.

If an application is auto approved for one Conference (e.g. Labour) any application to the other Conference (e.g. Conservative) will also be approved without further checks.

Full Accreditation Process

All applications that are not auto approved will be subjected to the full accreditation process by the NAT including identity verification, initial police security screening and, where necessary, referral to the host force for an accreditation decision.

Once the accreditation process is completed the result will be communicated by the NAT to the political party via the web service. There are a number of options available as the result including approved or failed. There could also be a request for additional information or clarification. If the photograph supplied by the applicant is of insufficient quality for the purposes of identity verification and a replacement required, this will also be returned by the web service.

In some cases the applicant may be required to attend Conference Services during late accreditation for interview. The Party will be updated by the webserver that an applicant is required to attend the late accreditation centre to clear up any ambiguity, for example a discrepancy which has arisen during the validation process.

All workforce and security staff applicants are subject to identity verification, including (for non-UK applicants) valid entry into the UK and a right to work. Whilst some of these checks can be carried out through DVA and UKBA checks, many will require a face-to-face interview with a member of the NAT during which their identity documents are examined. These interviews will take place prior to Conference.

Once the accreditation process is completed the result will be communicated by the NAT to the political party applicant's organisation via CAP. This includes the need for additional information or a replacement photograph. Where a non-UK applicant requires a personal interview this information will also be sent to the organisation via CAP.

Where an applicant fails the accreditation process, the organisation for the individual will be informed via the webserver or CAP. They will not be provided with any details regarding the reasons for the failure. It will be the responsibility of the organisation/party/organiser to inform the individual the fact they have failed accreditation. If requested, the individual is advised to make application to GMP under the Freedom of Information Act if they require any further information. In the first instance the individual will send an email to the national.accreditation@gmp.police.uk mailbox regarding their request for information that the Police hold. The NAT will send the individual a link to the relevant police force/agency who holds and is the data owner of the information that caused concerns to fail the person from being afforded accreditation for said event.

3. Identity Verification (Validation)

A number of tools are used to verify the identity of the applicant. This applies to all applicants – Political Party, Workforce and Security Staff. The first two tools provide official photographic comparison and are considered sufficient. The remaining validation methods may require corroboration:

mCash

- mCash will be checked automatically by CAS to identify whether an applicant has previously applied to or attended a Conference within the past 5 years. Where a match is found the record should be selected and the person can be considered 'Validated'. The details of the current Conference will then be added to the applicant's mCash record. Where there is no match, a new mCash record is created, and further enquiries are required to validate that person (see below).
- Where the person is shown as 'Caution' or 'Failed' on mCash, further investigation is necessary to establish the reasons. This will include reviewing the previous application records and any supporting or additional documentation, eg. Referral forms. The application should then be progressed.

DVA (The Identity and Passport Service Database)

- DVA is checked to identify whether the applicant holds a UK passport
- If a possible match is found the data, including the image, is compared against the information submitted with the application
- If the match is confirmed the applicant is 'Validated'. If there is no match other validation checks must be carried out

Commercial Identity Checking Systems

- Name Tracer pro

Commercial Information Databases and Web Sites

- Google
- Company and Corporate web sites
- Theyworkforyou.com
- Experian

External Agencies & Organisations

- UKBA
- HM Revenue & Customs
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Local Councils (Council Tax)
- Banks
- Utilities
- DWP

Police Databases used for Validation

- PNC
- PND

Personal Interview

- If the applicant's identity cannot be verified by any of the above routes, they will be invited to attend a face-to-face interview with a member of the NAT. At this interview they will be required to produce identification documentation. The interview must be attended, and the necessary identification documentation must be produced, by the applicant in person.

Outcome of Identity Verification

Where an applicant's identity is successfully verified, CAS will be updated accordingly and the NAT will commence initial police security checking. The NAT Accreditation Manager will

be informed if it has not been possible to validate the applicant, and will decide on further action. If the applicant's identity cannot be validated, then the record will be forwarded to the host Police Force for further consideration.

4. Initial Police Security Checking (Vetting)

The purpose of the NAT's initial police security check is to determine: (i) whether it is possible for the NAT to approve the accreditation application; or (ii) whether it is necessary for the application to be referred by the NAT to the host force for an accreditation decision.

Exemptions from Police Security Checking

All applicants must have their identity verified. Once this has been completed, the categories of individuals set out below are exempt from the police security checking.

Serving members of:

- The House of Commons
- The European and Scottish Parliaments
- The Welsh Assembly
- The Northern Ireland Assembly
- The House of Lords

Diplomats

Persons under 14

Members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) - Labour

The Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) - Labour

All other applicants will undergo initial police security checking by the NAT. The extent of the police security checks is dependent on the applicant's role at the Party Conference, their previous attendance history and information that may be revealed in the police security checking process.

Standard police security checks

Where the mCash check (see above) returns a status result of approved, this means that the applicant has attended the relevant political party's Party Conference within the last two years. The accreditation officer will select the type of police security check required as 'Standard'.

Standard police security checks, which will automatically be created, are checks on the following:

- PNC – Names
- NCTPOC

Enhanced police security checks

Enhanced police security checks are, in addition to the Standard police security checks, checks on the following:

- PND
- i24/7 (non-UK applicants)

Where the mCash check (see above) returns a status result of approved – Over two years old or there is no trace of the applicant on mCash, the accreditation officer will select the type of police security check required as ‘Enhanced’.

Where the mCash check (see above) returns a status result of caution, the accreditation officer will select the type of police security check required as ‘Enhanced’ unless other information or circumstances indicate a different level is required. The mCash check could return a status result of caution for a number of reasons, including:

- The applicant was successfully accredited for a Party Conference the past two years but did not use their pass to attend Conference.
- The applicant was being processed through the initial police security checks but did not complete them. This could have been for a number of reasons including an unfulfilled request for further information or clarification of information (eg. date of birth or current/previous address) or for a new photograph.

Special Enhanced police security checks

Special Enhanced police security checks are, in addition to the standard and enhanced police security checks, checks of the following (as appropriate):

- CTU – checks with the local CTU and/or the applicant’s
- UKBA
- Europol and/or Interpol
- National Crime Agency (NCA)

There are three criteria which may cause an applicant to be subject to special enhanced police security checks. These are:

- Convictions or Intelligence
- Role at Conference
- Personal History

Convictions or Intelligence

Where standard or enhanced police security checks applicant has either one or more convictions or is the subject of intelligence regarding involvement in terrorism, firearms, explosives, violence, drug or people trafficking, hate crime, protests, demonstrations, single interest groups, immigration issues, membership of a Proscribed Organisation, mental illness, fixated behaviour, or any other type of conviction or intelligence that gives rise to concerns as to whether the applicant would pose a risk to the safety of those present at the Party Conference.

Role at Conference

Where an applicant is a member of any media organisation, a party steward, or applying to work as security staff or workforce, due to their role during the security operation, they are deemed to be a higher risk due to their access and integral role during the security operation.

Personal History

Where a person is a:

- A non-UK national
- UK National with a possible origin outside the UK
- A non-UK national who does not produce a passport or National ID Card
- Applicant who has entered the UK in the last 12 months
- Applicant who discloses a change of name
- Shown on mCash as Failed - where the applicant has previously had a Party Conference accreditation application refused
- Any application where the accreditation officer carrying out the standard or enhanced police security checks has concerns as to whether the applicant would pose a risk to the safety of those present at the Party Conference.

Where one or more of these three criteria apply, the accreditation officer will select the type of police security check required as special enhanced.

Details of the outcome of any sensitive checks will, if positive and relevant, be recorded within the CTU (i.e not on mCash) and classified as 'Secret'.

5. Outcome of Accreditation

The NAT's accreditation officers have delegated authority from the Chief Constable of the host force to approve accreditation applications in the following circumstances:

- Applicant is known on mCash and their status is recorded as 'Approved'. Standard police security checks have been completed do not reveal intelligence or convictions which meet the referral criteria (see below).
- Applicant is not known on mCash but is validated following identify verification. Standard Police security checks have been completed and do not reveal intelligence or convictions that meet the referral criteria (see below).

Where the above conditions are not met the application must be referred to the NAT accreditation manager for review.

The NAT's CTU accreditation officers have delegated authority from the Chief Constable of the host force to approve accreditation applications where police security checks on NCTPOC, CTU systems have been completed and do not reveal any intelligence that meets the referral criteria (see below).

Where the above conditions are not met the application must be referred to the NAT accreditation officer/CTU accreditation officer for review by the NAT accreditation manager. The NAT accreditation manager has delegated authority from the Chief Constable of the host force to approve accreditation applications where the necessary police security checks have been completed, the application has been referred to the NAT accreditation manager and, upon review, the accreditation manager considers that the checks do not reveal any intelligence that meets the referral criteria (see below).

6. Referral to the host force

Where the NAT's initial police security checks reveal convictions/cautions/intelligence/information which, upon review, the NAT accreditation manager considers meet the criteria for referral to the host force, the application will be referred to the host force for an accreditation decision. See the PCPG NAT Referral Policy for the criteria by which the NAT decides whether an application should be referred to the host force ("the referral criteria").

Only the host force has the power to refuse an accreditation application.

The NAT will prepare an electronic accreditation referral. This will include the applicant's details, the police security checks carried out, a summary of the relevant results obtained and reason for referral. The referral will be endorsed by the NAT accreditation manager and supplied to either the Silver Commander or Security Coordinator (SecCo) in the host force. The exception to this is where the host force is Greater Manchester Police (where the NAT is currently based). Where the conference or event is taking place in the Greater Manchester Police area, the Greater Manchester Police Silver Commander or Security Coordinator (SecCo) will be provided with a list of referrals by the NAT accreditation manager and will view the material that would otherwise have been included on a referral directly on CAS.

Where the NAT's police security checks reveal a potential threat of terrorism that is considered to be sensitive, the results of the security checks and (where relevant) the rationale for referral should be omitted from the electronic accreditation referral form submitted by the NAT to the host force and be hand-written on a printed version. All actions, considerations and any rationale that have been documented and classified as 'Secret' must be retained within the appropriate CTU location. This may include the host force's CTU environment.

An applicant who has applied to attend more than one Party Conference and referred to the host force by the NAT with respect to each conference will have their application assessed by each host force.

The host force will conduct its own police security checks on the applicant as required and make an accreditation decision in accordance with its own Accreditation Policy. A referral by the NAT does **not** a recommendation by the NAT that the host force should refuse an accreditation application.

Once the host force has made its accreditation decision, it will communicate that decision to the NAT. If the application is refused, the host force will retain a copy of its reasons for the refusal.

The NAT will inform the political party/major event organiser that the application has been approved or, as the case may be, refused. The NAT will not inform the political party/major event organiser of the reasons why the application was refused.

The NAT will update CAS with the host force's accreditation decision, including details of the decision maker.

Right to make representations/appeal

Since the NAT does not have the power to refuse accreditation applications, the applicant has no right to make representations/right of appeal with respect to a decision by the NAT to refer an application to the host force for an accreditation decision.

For details of the applicant's right to make representations before the host force reaches a final accreditation decision on an application referred to it by NAT, see the relevant host force's Accreditation Policy.

Where an applicant's police accreditation is approved, the Political Party/major event organiser retains the right to withhold accreditation / admittance to the applicant. For details of the right to make representations / right of appeal with respect to a decision by the Political Party/major event organiser to refuse accreditation / admission, the applicant should contact relevant Political Party/major event organiser.

Data Protection

Personal Data in the context of accreditation referrals is processed in accordance with and in compliance of Part 3 Data Protection Act 2018- for the law enforcement purpose of preventing crime and disorder and avoiding threats to the security of party conferences and other events.

Data may be shared with other agencies for law enforcement purposes.

Applicants may exercise their right under the Data Protection Act 2018 to lodge a subject access request, with a view to obtaining further data that may be held on them by the NAT. Details can be obtained by visiting the following website <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/your-right-of-access/>

Official