

## **GMP Force Vetting Unit Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why do we vet people?**

Everyone in the police service must maintain high ethical and professional standards and act with the utmost integrity. They must maintain and promote such standards. A thorough and effective vetting regime is a key component in assessing an individual's integrity. It helps to reassure the public that appropriate checks are conducted on individuals in positions of trust. Vetting also identifies areas of vulnerability which could damage public confidence in a Force or the wider police service.

Vetting clearances must be granted before an individual is appointed to ensure they are suitable to serve in the police service.

The below frequently asked questions should address many of the questions that commonly arise as you complete your vetting application. If there are any questions you would like answered that are not covered, feel free to contact the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Force Vetting Unit - 0161 856 2419.

The success of the vetting process largely depends on individuals disclosing all relevant information so that potential risks can be effectively managed.

The GMP Force Vetting Unit undertakes the completion of all vetting in compliance with the standards set in the 2023 Vetting Code of Practice and the supporting College of Policing Vetting Authorised Professional Practice.

As a statutory code of practice issued under section 39A of the Police Act 1996, the Code is the single national standard that must be followed by all forces.

### **Who is affected?**

The vetting requirement applies to employed staff, volunteers and other non-police personnel who are engaged in support of Greater Manchester Police or who work in associated partnerships.

The extent to which vetting is undertaken is balanced against the level of access required to police premises, sensitive information, computer systems and roles working closely with vulnerable individuals. This is necessary to achieve safeguards required within the Human Rights and Data Protection legislation.

The information provided as part of the vetting process will be treated in the strictest confidence but will not be immune from disclosure and consideration in respect of serious disciplinary or criminal matters that may be revealed through or facilitated by vetting enquiries. Where this is the case, information provided in this questionnaire may be disclosed in any subsequent proceedings.

### **How does the vetting system work?**

Applicants will be asked to complete an online vetting form and provide personal information.

It is mandatory to include the following persons on your vetting form and failure to include the relevant details may lead to a vetting refusal on the grounds of omission of relevant information;

- parents (full, step, adoptive and parents' partner)
- children (full, step, adopted, fostered, partner's children) over the age of 10 years
- siblings (full, step, adopted, fostered, half)
- spouse/partner (includes boyfriend, girlfriend whether living together or not)
- house mates/lodgers (including shared accommodation with communal areas)
- criminal associates (associations who you know are, or think may be, involved in criminal activities, or has a conviction or caution).

Please ensure you include all

- full names
- maiden and previous names
- dates of birth
- place of birth and
- addresses.

If you do not know their details, please ensure you ask family members or anyone who may be able to help you obtain this information. If you are unable to provide any of these details, you must provide us with a full rationale as to why this information cannot be provided.

Details are checked against criminal, intelligence and national security records, other public records such as the electoral role and credit reference agencies. We also check content on publicly available social media sites for the purposes of service reputational reassurance and compatibility with the Code of Ethics.

### **Can I work within the police service if I have criminal convictions or cautions?**

There is not a prescriptive list of convictions and cautions that lead to a vetting rejection. Each case is considered on its own individual merits in relation to the role being undertaken and assets being accessed. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975 does not apply to any police officer posts, but it does apply to all police staff employee.

Applications for a position as a police officer; a special constable; or as a member of police staff where that member of staff may be in the evidential chain are rejected in all cases where:

- offences were committed as an adult or juvenile which resulted in a prison sentence (including custodial, suspended or deferred sentence and sentences served at a young offenders' institution or community home); or
- the applicant is a registered sex offender or is subject to a registration requirement in respect of any other conviction.

There is a rebuttable presumption, subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, that a person will not be suitable to hold vetting clearance if they have a conviction or caution for a criminal offence, especially if it:

- relates to dishonest or corrupt practices
- relates to violence
- demonstrates a targeting of persons due to their vulnerabilities or protected characteristics

#### **Motoring Offences:**

Convictions or offences dealt by the way of fixed penalties for minor motoring offences should not in themselves be a barrier to recruitment unless the applicant is a persistent offender, but each case will be considered on its merits.

For more serious motoring offences, including those that result in disqualification, each will be considered on its merits and, whilst the rebuttable presumption is that convictions, cautions or other sanctions should lead to rejection, there may be cases where this may be disproportionate in the circumstances.

Your application will automatically be rejected for the following motor offences:

- Death by careless or dangerous driving.
- Any offence that results in a prison sentence.

### **What is the purpose of financial enquiries?**

Applicants to Greater Manchester Police should normally be free from undischarged debt or liability and be able to manage existing loans. Where this is not the case they become a vulnerable person who may be targeted by unscrupulous individuals or groups with something to gain. Consequently financial checks are conducted on the applicant to ensure they are managing any existing debt and not living beyond your means.

When considering an applicant requiring financial checks, applicants that can show long term adherence to debt management arrangements and Individual Voluntary Arrangement's may be considered. Documentary evidence should be provided to demonstrate the commitment and adherence to any such debt management arrangements.

However, applicants will not be considered if they:

- have existing County Court Judgments (CCJs) outstanding against them
- have been registered bankrupt and three years have not passed since the date your bankruptcy was discharged
- been granted a debt relief order (DRO) and three years have not passed since the date it was finalised

It is strongly recommended that applicants run a free credit report before completing their vetting application. It could highlight defaulted accounts or CCJs that could easily be resolved or managed before submitting their vetting application.

### **What if I keep quiet about something in my past and hope no-one finds out?**

Knowingly providing false information, deliberately misleading information or concealing information on a vetting form or at any subsequent interview could be regarded as evidence of unreliability and / or dishonesty. Your clearance could be declined because of this, even though what you were seeking to conceal would not itself have caused a problem. Furthermore, your clearance could be removed later if the facts subsequently come to light.

The vetting process requires scrutiny to be applied to the following factors:

- adverse recruitment intelligence through previous police service recruitment processes.
- providing false or deliberately misleading information or omitting significant information from the vetting application form past infringement of security or vetting policy or procedures.
- failure to disclose a change of circumstances.
- association with people who have previous convictions or who are reasonably suspected of being involved in crime, which could not be managed by any risk mitigation and notifiable association policy, or where these are not being complied with.
- financial vulnerability.
- improper or inappropriate online activities.
- dismissal from a previous role for conduct concerns.
- probationary constables discharged from the police service under Regulation 13 of the Police Regulations 2003.
- evidence of violence, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, racism, homophobia or disablism.
- evidence of sexual impropriety, sexism, misogyny, domestic abuse, stalking, harassment, or controlling or coercive behaviour.
- evidence of violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- abuse of position, including APSP.
- evidence of unsatisfactory behaviour not in keeping with the behaviour expectations and principles of the Code of Ethics.
- adverse counter corruption intelligence.
- significant adverse complaint or conduct history.
- previous breach of the standards of professional behaviour.
- past infringement of security or vetting policy or procedures.
- drug and alcohol misuse.
- identified conflict of interest.
- patterns of adverse behaviours.
- other inappropriate behaviour that impinges on a person's suitability to serve in the role.
- other identified areas of concern, such as an individual's character, maturity and integrity.

This list is not hierarchical or exhaustive.

### **What else can I do to ensure my vetting application is not delayed unnecessarily?**

- ensure maiden names, dates of birth and addresses are provided for all listed people on your vetting forms
- where you cannot establish specific details, include a rationale detailing why, but please note that failure to submit details which you cannot reasonably account for, could lead to a vetting refusal
- ensure all County Court Judgements (CCJs) are satisfied
- have up to date Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA) documents demonstrating you are not defaulting on any payment plans in place

- if you are applying for a police officer or special constable role you must declare all police contact, arrest history and reprimands, warnings, cautions and convictions (this list is not exhaustive). Failure to declare police contact is highly likely to lead to a vetting refusal
- please ensure you check your emails and your 'junk/spam' folder as often an applicant's lack of response to a communication from us is because the email has been diverted to another email folder

### **If am declined, is there an appeal process?**

If you are declined vetting, you can appeal where you believe one or more of the following factors apply:

- further information is available that was not considered by the decision maker
- the decision is disproportionate considering the circumstances or details of the case
- the decision was perverse or unreasonable
- no explanation was given for the decision

Any appeal must be in writing and must clearly set out the grounds for the appeal. Appeals are dealt with by individuals who were independent of the original vetting decision making process. The appeal decision is final.