



**Private & Confidential**

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Our Ref: HMICFRS Vetting Standards  
Enquiries To: HR – Anne Stunell  
Direct Line: 01296 744621  
Date: 3 March 2023  
E-Mail: astunell@bucksfire.gov.uk

Sent via email  
Roy.Wilsher@HMICFRS.gov.uk

Dear Roy,

**Re: Request for Information – Vetting Standards**

**1. Does your service undertake background checks on staff (not DBS)? If yes, what are they and who are they for?**

BFRS collect the following information:

- a. Right to work in the UK
  - i. This includes Passport/Birth Certificate for all staff and visas where applicable
- b. References
  - i. Two references are requested for all staff, one of which must be from their current or most recent employer
  - ii. For those who are self-employed or have gaps in employment a personal/character reference from a professional person is requested
- c. Training Records/Certificates/Qualifications
  - i. Training records are requested from other Fire Services to confirm the individuals' competencies for those staff in operational roles
  - ii. Relevant qualifications are also requested for their job role such as an LGV licence, CIPD or a degree. Requests are made for all staff where it is relevant to their role
- d. Full Driving Licence that is valid in the UK
  - i. Driving licences are checked for staff whose role requires them to drive a Service vehicle, as well as anyone using their personal car for business use
  - ii. An external service carries out driving licence checks
- e. Some roles require external agencies to carry out further security clearance checks
  - i. For example, NILO, Prevent panel, CTLP Liaison, National Security Vetting



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## **2. Does your service undertake DBS checks on staff?**

Yes, Enhanced plus Adult and Children Barred lists.

The DBS procedure has been reviewed and is currently being consulted upon before undergoing the governance process.

Further information on the DBS including risk assessing positive content is being ratified by the NFCC on 3 March 2023.

We have 330 staff who have a current, in date DBS check, which is 93% of all staff who require a DBS check.

We recommend all Fire and Rescue Services adopt our approach to DBS checks.

## **3. If yes, what is the requirement and renewal for DBS checks?**

We undertake Enhanced plus adult and children's barred list DBS checks. These checks are completed for staff who hold any position that requires a DBS check, which includes the following roles:

- a. Firefighter (including On-Call)
- b. Crew Commander (including On-Call)
- c. Watch Commander (including On-Call)
- d. Station Commander
- e. Group Commander
- f. Area Commander
- g. Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- h. Chief Fire Officer
- i. Flexi Firefighter
- j. Flexi Crew Commander
- k. Flexi Watch Commander
- l. Area Trainer
- m. On-Call Support Manager
- n. Community Safety Advisor
- o. Community Safety Officer
- p. Community Safety Coordinator
- q. Community Safety Team Leader
- r. Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager
- s. Business Fire Safety Advisor
- t. Business Fire Safety Inspector
- u. Firesetter Intervention/Youth Inclusion
- v. Firesetter Advisors
- w. Data Intelligence team



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- x. Principal Accountant
  - y. Employee Development Officer

We submit the initial DBS check using three forms of identification through Buckinghamshire Council. Once the results are received, we address any concerns with a risk assessment and meeting with the member of staff. They are then entered onto the Update Service if all is cleared, with a renewal required on an annual basis.

A Status Check is carried out each year when the Update Service is renewed to confirm if there is new content or not. If there is new content, a brand-new DBS check is completed, and a risk assessment is carried out following confirmation. The member of staff must be put on the Update Service again if the risk assessment confirms they are still suitable for the role.

Weekly reports are run to check all DBS checks are currently in date. Any issues are highlighted/escalated.

#### **4. Does your service undertake any other vetting processes? If so, what are they?**

As part of the recruitment processes staff are required to undergo different stages including:

- a. Medicals/Medical Questionnaires
  - i. Full medicals where fitness, eyesight, hearing, medical history, drug and alcohol etc. is tested
  - ii. Medical questionnaire, which looks at medical history to confirm if the staff member requires adjustments
- b. Role Related Tests including Bleep Test
  - i. A series of tests that ascertain suitability for the role, such as ladder climb, haul aloft and lower, ladder lift, equipment carry, confined space test etc. and a bleep test
- c. Behaviour Workshop
  - i. A workshop where we observe suitable behaviours such as teamwork, courage to challenge and confidence etc.
- d. Interviews
  - i. A formal interview with set questions and competencies to assess and score candidates against. All interviewers are trained
- e. SHL/Written Tests
  - i. A set of questions in written tests that staff complete such as English and Maths which are carried out alongside interviews to assess suitability for the role
- f. Role specific tests
  - i. The tests are role dependant, for example, asking the applicant to prioritise emails or create a rota based on specific information



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- g. Presentations
    - i. In some interviews applicants are asked to present on a specific topic, these are assessed against predetermined criteria such as confidence and how the presentation looks visually etc.

**5. Is your vetting requirement role specific? Please explain in more detail**

Yes, as below:

- a. Medicals/Medical Questionnaires
  - i. Full medicals are given to operational staff as their job requires them to be medically fit etc.
  - ii. A thorough medical similar to those given to operational staff is given to workshop staff to ensure they are safe from exposure to any chemicals in their job role
  - iii. Medical questionnaires are given to support services staff, which are assessed for whether any adjustments need to be made to support them carry out their role. They do not require full medicals unless the member of staff states something in the questionnaire that requires further information
  - iv. Medical assessments are completed for operational staff when they come into contact with hazardous chemicals, such as Asbestos, to ensure they are fit to continue their role and monitor their exposure
- b. Role Related Tests including bleep test
  - i. These are carried out for operational staff as there are specific areas we need to test them for, such as working at height, claustrophobia, fitness
- c. The Behaviour workshop
  - i. This test is given to operational staff as specific behaviours are sought, such as courage to challenge etc. due to their role in the community
  - ii. Support Services staff behaviours are tested during interview, such as teamwork
- d. Formal Interviews
  - i. Each recruitment process requires an interview. Competency and skills-based interviews are used in specific roles. The type of interview and the questions asked depend on the type of role and what skills and experience are required
- e. SHL/Written tests
  - i. Written tests are not required but are dependent upon the role the member of staff is applying for. For example, someone working in Finance would need to be tested to ensure they are competent in



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maths. Someone working in administration might need to be assessed for their accuracy of data input etc. Specific tests can be picked for specific roles to be carried out alongside interviews to assess their suitability for the role

f. Role specific tests

- i. These tests are role specific and based upon what skills and experience the role requires. For example, someone in Resource Management Team might undertake a test where they have to design a rota based on specific information about the team, this would be a task they would have to undertake in the role

g. Presentations

- i. Similar to role specific tests, presentations are completed for any role, but the topic of the presentation would be specific to the role such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on the email address or telephone number above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Anne Stunell'.

**Anne Stunell**  
**Head of Human Resources**