

# NATIONAL SECURITY VETTING (NSV) CLEARANCE LEVELS IN THE UK

CLEARANCE LEVEL	ABOUT	WHO NEEDS IT?	HOW LONG IS IT VALID?	CHECKS INVOLVED
<b>BASELINE PERSONNEL SECURITY STANDARD (BPSS)</b>	The BPSS is the recognised standard for the pre-employment screening of individuals with access to government assets or premises.	All civil servants, members of the armed forces, temporary staff in departments, and government contractors.	No expiry date.	Identity (ID) check Employment history Criminal record check Right to work in the UK (UK residency may affect these checks)
<b>SECURITY CHECK (SC)</b>	This clearance allows individuals to access sensitive information but not classified material.	Individuals who require access to classified material up to "SECRET" level and/or occasional, supervised access to TOP SECRET assets.  And for individuals who while not in such posts, will be in a position to directly or indirectly bring about the same degree of damage, will have sufficient knowledge to obtain a comprehensive picture of a SECRET plan, policy or project, are being considered for employment where it would not be possible to make reasonable career progress without security clearance for access to SECRET assets, or who require access to certain levels of classified material originating from another country or international organisation.	Up to 10 years (7 years for non-FSC contractors). Most commonly renewed every 5 years.	BPSS completion Security questionnaire completion Departmental/Company records check Criminal record check, both spent and unspent Financial & credit checks Security Service records check Potential for interview if there are unresolved security concerns or if recommended by the Security Service Potential for additional financial questionnaire if any unresolved concerns are apparent
<b>ENHANCED SECURITY CHECK (ESC)</b>	This check is a more thorough version of the SC for high-risk roles where access to sensitive material or systems is vital.	Specific roles, including: posts in which there is a requirement to access SECRET code word material. Posts that have been designated as requiring eSC because of the level of access they confer to certain specified information systems. Certain overseas posts that have been assessed as exposing the holder to a significant espionage threat and/or have a lower than average level of management oversight.	No expiry date but most organisation require a renewal every 1-3 years.	BPSS completion Security Questionnaire, Financial Questionnaire Internet Questionnaire Departmental/company records check Criminal records check, both spent and unspent Financial and credit checks Security Service record checks Detailed interview with an Investigating Officer
<b>DEVELOPED VETTING (DV)</b>	One of the highest level of clearance required for those who need access to the most sensitive national security information.	Individuals working in roles which require them to have frequent and uncontrolled access to TOP SECRET assets or require any access to TOP SECRET codeword material. And for anyone who is not in such posts but will be in a position to directly or indirectly bring about the same degree of damage. Anyone who requires frequent and uncontrolled access to Category I nuclear material and/or requires access to certain levels of classified material originating from another country or international organisation.	Up to 7 years.	BPSS completion Completion of a DV Security Questionnaire Departmental/company records check Criminal records check (both spent and unspent) Credit and financial check Security Service records check Personal finances review A detailed interview conducted by an Investigating Officer Interviews with referees conducted by an Investigating Officer

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<b>ENHANCED DEVELOPED VETTING (EDV)</b>	An even more comprehensive version of DV, typically for high-security roles requiring near complete access to national security information. It can only be requested by a small number of Sponsors and only with an existing prior agreement with UKSV and the Cabinet Office.	High-ranking personnel in sensitive roles, such as senior officers within the armed forces or intelligence services.	Typically up to 5 years.	Completion of a DV Security Questionnaire (including a family and travel element) Criminal Record check Security Services check Credit reference check Financial investigation Interviews with applicant, supervisor & referee Checks may extend to third parties included on the Security Questionnaire
<b>UK EYES ONLY (UKEO) SECURITY CLEARANCE</b>	Security clearance for access to UK-only classified information.	Personnel working with information classified at or below "SECRET" level but designated as "UK Eyes Only" (restricted to UK citizens or certain entities).	Dependent on role.	It is based on the same checks as SC or DV, but it is specifically for those with restricted access to information that cannot be shared with non-UK entities.
<b>NATO SECURITY CLEARANCE</b>	Required for personnel working with or accessing NATO classified information.	Individuals working with NATO projects or those in roles that require access to NATO classified documents and information.	Dependent on role.	Depending on the role, this clearance level will require checks similar to UK SC or DV, with an emphasis on international trustworthiness. Personnel may need to undergo additional vetting specific to NATO protocols, including liaison with foreign NATO member states' security services.
<b>SPECIAL TREATMENT &amp; RESTRICTED ACCESS PROCEDURES (STRAP) CLEARANCE</b>	A high-level clearance required for specific individuals working with highly classified materials, typically within the defence or intelligence sector.	Military or intelligence personnel with specific roles requiring access to the most sensitive documents or operations.	Dependent on role.	Including checks at the SC or DV level, depending on the role, with additional scrutiny due to the strategic importance of the information handled.

Security clearances are put in place to ensure that individuals can be trusted with sensitive or classified information. The level of scrutiny required is dependent on the sensitivity of the role and the access needed. The length of validity for each clearance varies, but generally, the more sensitive the role, the more frequent the checks. For most clearances, such as SC, DV, and EDV, the renewal period is every 5 years, but this can vary based on the individual's role, changes in personal circumstances, and the nature of the information they handle and is at the discretion of the employing organisation.