Security Screening Guidance – Guidelines for recruiting managers

Security screening checks are in addition to the standard pre-employment checks of Right to Work in UK, identity/proof of address check etc. They apply based on the activity required in the role.

Security screening checks should only be undertaken where it has been clearly stated in the advert and/or job description duties and responsibilities for the role what checks are required and the reasons for them.

It is the responsibility of the Principle Investigator (PI) for the project to manage any risk involved with the study or research. The recruiting manager, if not the PI, should ensure the security checks are sufficient to meet the risk assessment requirements for the project. Requested screening checks must be justifiable and reasonable for the role.

If the information provided to HR within the job description about why a security check is required is not clear, sufficient or justifiable further information will be requested or the request for the check may be removed.

For roles where a Research Passport will be required it may be appropriate to include the requirement for the relevant type of security screening check within the job description. Not all Research Passports require a security screening check so this should be checked with the relevant trust for what their requirements may be.

**Basic DBS**

Provides snapshot in time and only covers convictions where the person has been prosecuted.

A Basic DBS check is for any purpose, including employment. The certificate will contain details of convictions and conditional cautions that are considered to be unspent under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974.

Might be used in conjunction with University Enhanced-Level screening

**Enhanced DBS**

Provides snapshot in time.

The certificate will contain details of both spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings that are held on the Police National Computer, which are not subject to filtering.

The certificate may also contain non-conviction information supplied by relevant police forces, if it is deemed relevant and ought to be contained in the certificate.

There are two options available under the enhanced level check. A Workforce check and a Barring list check. The Barring list check can only be requested where there is regulated activity involved. It is illegal to carry-out a barring list check for a post that doesn’t include regulated activity for the relevant group ie children or vulnerable adults. It’s the situation not the attributes of the adult that makes them vulnerable (eg provision of health care, handling their finances).

An enhanced check (minus the barring list) can be requested for roles that have direct patient/study participant access whether in person or remotely, if the risk assessment of the post identifies that patients may be vulnerable or there is an opportunity for a study participant to be exploited (eg the researcher knows personal information such as home address; when the person is likely to be out or home alone; or can build up a relationship of trust that could be exploited later). The place where the activity will take place should always be stated.

Consider what opportunities there are to exploit the participant. It’s about the person not the data, just having access to confidential data is not a DBS matter (it’s contractual).

University Enhanced Level check

Would normally compliment a Basic DBS or an Enhanced check without barring list.

Does not provide information about prosecutions unless mentioned in the media.

This check looks into social media activity and general media activity. Any ‘open source’ information.

Likely to be appropriate for researchers who visit study participants in home settings.

**Additional check not possible**

In some circumstances it may not be possible to conduct the requested check. The individual can refuse to have a background check or the individual may be not be resident in the UK before the start of their appointment and overseas check was not able to be conducted or would be of limited usefulness. The risk should be assessed at this stage by the recruiting manager together with the PI for the project. The offer to employ may be withdrawn on the grounds of the individual not being able to meet the criteria for employment. Always speak to HR where this might be the case.

Further Information

See Security screening matrix for common duties where additional screening may be required.

See Screening Types of checks for expanded detail of the available checks.

See Regulated Activity with Adults in England and Regulated Activity with Children in England.

Screening checks frequency

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| New Employee | New check made or other organisation check if the previous check covers the same criteria and was made within the previous 12 months |  |
| Existing employee | Enhanced DBS to be rechecked every 3 years where the requirements of the role are the same | Enhanced DBS expires after 3 years.Basic DBS does not expire. |