

Question	Answer
BPSS	
What does BPSS stand for?	Baseline Personnel Security Standard BPSS-Guidance-For-Contractors-V.25-October-2022 (parliament.uk)
Why is BPSS required?	<p>BPSS checks and supporting guidance describe the mandatory pre-employment controls required to address the problems of identity fraud, illegal working, and deception generally and to confirm the identity of an individual (employee or contractor) and their rights to work in the UK. These checks are a pre-requisite to National Security Vetting (NSV) and provide a level of assurance as to the individuals' trustworthiness, honesty, integrity, and values required for the position they will be carrying out. BPSS checks mitigate the risks associated with the individuals working with potentially sensitive information.</p>
What information is included in this type of check?	<p>A BPSS check consists of verification made up of the following 4 parts (RICE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to work – Nationality and Immigration Status (including an entitlement to undertake the work in question) • Identity – ID Data check (electronic identity authentication- name, address, aliases, links, accounts, etc). • Criminal Records – Search for unspent convictions only (Basic Disclosure) (For Parliament this includes Spent and Unspent, criminal convictions, court appearances, arrests, and other contact with the Police. These checks will be conducted for you by Parliament). • Employment history check – Confirmation of past 3 years employment (minimum) history / activity <p>In addition, candidates are required to disclose any significant periods spent abroad (6 months or more in the past 3 years).</p>
When should it be undertaken?	<p>NSV must not begin before the BPSS controls are applied. The standard underpins National Security Vetting. Failure to complete the BPSS checks first can severely affect the value of subsequent NSV checks.</p>
Does everyone need to undergo BPSS?	<p>All those needing a security clearance MUST have undergone BPSS first. BPSS is a pre-requisite to granting of NSV.</p>
What about contractors?	<p>Contractors needing access to the parliamentary estate, sensitive information/assets, or the parliamentary IT network, must have successfully completed BPSS before applying for security clearance.</p>
Does BPSS need to be repeated/updated?	<p>BPSS need only be repeated if the applicant has changed companies. Otherwise, this is not required.</p>

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<p>What documents need to be seen?</p>	<p>There is no definitive list of identifying documents and not all documents are of equal value. The ideal is a document that is issued by a trustworthy and reliable source, is difficult to forge, has been dated and is current, contains the owner's name, photograph and signature, and itself requires some evidence of identity before being issued (e.g., a passport or ID Card). This could include but not limited to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current signed full passport, travel document, National ID Card and/or other documentation relating to immigration status and permission to work • Current UK photocard driving licence • Current full UK driving licence (old version) • Current evidence of entitlement to DWP benefits (e.g., Universal Credit) • Building industry sub-contractor's certificate issued by HMRC • Recent HMRC tax notification • Current firearms certificate • Birth certificate (long version only) <p><u>For right to work checks conducted on or after 28/01/19, a short UK birth certificate is an acceptable document to demonstrate a right to work in combination with an appropriately documented national insurance number.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation to show proof of address (utility bills, bank and building society letters or statements and letters from Government Departments are acceptable). They must be no more than six months old. Driving licenses are acceptable. Credit and store card statements, mobile telephone bills, private tenancy agreements, payslips, P60 and P45 and documents printed off the internet are not acceptable. The applicant must provide you with their National Insurance Number (NINO). You are not required to carry out any checks on the number • Three-year employment/educational history (work, personal or character references).
<p>What records do I need to keep?</p>	<p>All documentation received for the purpose of a BPSS check must be kept for each applicant. This documentation is required to be made available during an audit of BPSS compliance, which is usually undertaken within 2 years of the completion of the BPSS. Right to work checks should be kept by the employer for the length of employment plus 2 years.</p>
<p>Do I need to see the original documents?</p>	<p>All documentation received needs to be original documentation and not copies.</p>
<p>References</p>	<p>It is necessary to check all referees' contact details provided by an applicant before using them to confirm dates of employment/attendance (Independent verification). To independently verify contact details, use the internet or some other independent method, such as a telephone directory, to check contact details.</p>

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	<p>Once verified, you can contact the referee to confirm dates of employment, education, travel, unemployment, or benefits. Company websites are acceptable but not LinkedIn. LinkedIn holds unverified information.</p> <p>A gap or gaps in an applicant's last three-year employment/educational history, of longer than a total of 3 months, requires a reference. This reference must demonstrate and explain the 'gap', i.e., where the applicant was, what they were doing, etc. It is NOT a character reference.</p> <p>Reasonable gaps between leaving school/college/university and starting college/university/work do not need verifying.</p> <p>If the referee is vouching for the applicant's character, the referee must have known the applicant for at least the last three years and be someone of standing in the local community. After independently verifying the referee's contact details you can obtain a personal reference. Private contact details are not acceptable.</p> <p>A list of Suggested Personal Character Referees can be found in Annex A.</p> <p>The referee must state how long they have known the applicant, and in what capacity. For example, I first met the applicant at university in September 2016. We have been close friends ever since.</p> <p>The reference needs dating, with the date that it was written.</p> <p>The referee needs to include their job title, so you can demonstrate they are a person of standing.</p> <p>The correspondence needs to be on headed paper or come from a works email account.</p> <p>The referee needs to vouch for the applicant's character.</p> <p>Personal references do not trump work/educational references.</p>
Right to Work in the UK	<p>Right to Work in the UK documentation must be kept by the employer for the duration of employment plus 2 years. This documentation (e.g., Passport/print out of online check) must be annotated with date conducted, who by, role and signed etc.</p>
Proof of address (POA)	<p>Check the applicant's UK home address (POA) against approved documentation. Assure yourself that the documentation is genuine. The documents must be copied and retained. Utility bills, bank and building society letters or statements and letters from Government Departments are acceptable. They must be no more than six months old. Driving licenses are acceptable.</p> <p>Credit and store card statements, mobile telephone bills, private tenancy agreements, payslips, P60 and P45 and documents printed off the internet are not acceptable.</p>

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<p>How long do I need to keep the documents/references/right to work/proof of address for?</p>	<p>You must keep documentary evidence demonstrating the completion of these checks. We require you to make these records available electronically.</p> <p>You have a contractual obligation to complete these checks and to make the records available for auditing.</p> <p>All copies must be dated, and the dates must pre-date the submission of the applicant's SQ.</p> <p>This contractual obligation is not affected by UK GDPR.</p> <p>Do not destroy leavers' records, until they have been audited.</p>
<p>Does keeping the records breach GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)?</p>	<p>Completing BPSS checks is part of a contractual obligation that is not affected by UK GDPR.</p>
<p>Can I get any training on how to carry out BPSS?</p>	<p>There are some useful links and guidance documents on the intranet here . Should you require any further advice or training, please contact the Audit and Compliance Team at act@parliament.uk</p>
<p>Who can I contact for advice about BPSS?</p>	<p>The Audit and Compliance Team can be contacted at act@parliament.uk</p>
<p>How can I obtain proof that my employee can undertake work in this country?</p>	<p>All employers must complete Nationality and Immigration checks on applicants before their employment starts.</p> <p>It is a legal requirement to complete this check.</p> <p>Refer to Home Office guidance on employer's right to work checks: -</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide/an-employers-guide-to-right-to-work-checks-6-april-2022-accessible-versionA</p> <p>Since Wednesday 6th April 2022, when you are checking the validity of the immigration document for an applicant, this check should be completed online via the HMG Employers Online Checking Service</p>
<p>Who are the Audit and Compliance Team (ACT)</p>	<p>The Audit and Compliance team interact with contractors and audit their submitted BPSS checks and security questionnaires/pass applications for compliance with the agreed national standards.</p> <p>If a contractor fails to maintain compliance with the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS), they are placed in a process named "special measures".</p>

	This process restricts the contractor's ability to submit new pass applications to security vetting until ACT have verified that the pass applications are compliant with the required BPSS standard.
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ANNEX A: Suggested Personal Character Referees

Accountant	Airline pilot	Bank official
Building Society official	Barrister	Chairman/director of limited company
Chiropodist	Commissioner of oaths	Councillor (local or county)
Civil servant (permanent)	Dentist/Doctor	Director/manager of a VAT-registered charity
Director/manager/personnel officer of a VAT-registered company	Engineer (with professional qualifications)	Financial services intermediary (e.g. a stockbroker or insurance broker)
Fire service official	Funeral director	Insurance agent (full time) of a recognised company
Justice of the Peace	Legal secretary (fellow or associate member of the Institute of Legal Secretaries and PAs)	Licensee of public house
Local government officer	Manager/personnel officer (Of a limited company)	Member, associate, or fellow of a professional body

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Member of Parliament	Merchant Navy officer	Minister of a recognised religion (including Christian Science)
Nurse (RGN and RMN)	Officer of the armed services (active or retired)	Optician
Paralegal (certified paralegal, qualified paralegal, or associate member of the Institute of Paralegals)	Person with honours (an OBE or MBE, for example)	Pharmacist
Photographer (professional)	Police officer	Post Office official
President/secretary of a recognised organisation	Salvation Army officer	Social worker
Solicitor	Surveyor	Teacher, lecturer
Trade union officer	Travel agent (qualified)	Valuer or auctioneer (fellows and associate members of the incorporated society)
Warrant Officers and Chief Petty Officers		