



Cerberus Frequently Asked Questions

General

As a Sponsor do I need to register?

If you are a MoD, or OGD Sponsor of National Security Vetting (NSV) applications you will need to register with your Departmental Security Authority (DSA). They in turn will verify your requirement and if they agree, will forward the necessary details to the Customer Services Division, Defence Business Services National Security Vetting (DBS NSV). Using these details an account will be opened which will allow you to use the Cerberus e-Form portals, which is the preferred Sponsor/applicant access route into the system. It will also allow the submission of the scannable forms should an e-Form application not be possible. If you are a MoD contractor you will need to have your application endorsed by DE&S. Details of the security authorities can be found on our Defence Intranet site.

Will I need any specialist training to use the e-Portal System?

No specialist training for accessing and using the e-portal will be required. The process of using the e-portal is very simple. The e-Forms have been designed for ease of use and contain both user prompts and extensive built in business rules to minimise or eliminate errors prior to submitting. e-Forms also have the advantage of being able to be saved during completion. The new scannable paper forms, along with instructions for their completion, are available to download from the DBS NSV website. However, the ability to save these forms either during or after completion is not available. These forms will have to be completed in one sitting and printed when complete. Or a blank form can be printed off and completed by hand. Those requiring access to the Cerberus Case Management System, as opposed to the e-portals, already know who they are and they will receive specialist training.

Can I use the very old coloured forms or the 1109/1138 forms?

All these forms have now ceased to be "Legal Tender" and can no longer be used for NSV applications.

What's in it for me?

Cerberus will provide a more streamlined, cost effective vetting process and it will also improve the quality of the end product.

- The e-Form portal is extremely user friendly, both for the Sponsor and Vetting Subject.
- Fully approved and tested security protocols are in place for both RLI/GSI and internet use.
- e-Forms feature help prompts as well as the built in business rules which minimise or eliminate errors, thus reducing requests for further information.
- Vetting Subjects are directed to complete only the questions that are relevant to them.
- Sponsors will be able to track their applications from their portal "Home Page"
- Sponsors will only have access to the part of the form they need to complete.
- e-Forms are flexible and allow the application to be saved at any stage during completion.

- Once completed, the e-form is submitted directly into Cerberus via the RLI/GSI or internet.
- Given the additional built in security measures, no “wet signatures” are required.
- Submission mail costs and delays are eliminated.
- Increased and targeted automation, coupled with improved system interfaces, will result in a decrease in processing times for straight forward applications.
- The quality of decision making will be enhanced as less time will be spent on clerical effort.
- Where possible, notification of clearance will be sent electronically to the Sponsor.
- Certain personnel management systems, (currently only within MOD but with opportunity to be extended to OGDs) will be informed electronically of the clearance details and review dates.

How can I access the e-Forms?

There are two e-Form portals, one hosted on the internet and one hosted on the RLI/GSi network. Due to security considerations the portal used by the Sponsor to initiate the application must be the portal used by the applicant to complete and submit the application. The Sponsor will be free to choose on which portal to initiate the application, depending upon the applicant's circumstances.

Will applicants be able to access the page from shared internet environments, such as libraries, and if so, should this be allowed?

It will be possible to access the e-Form Portal from a shared internet environment.

Do Internet security standards apply?

All internet traffic is fully encrypted.

How secure will it be, especially given the fact that the server will be on a commercially managed site?

The hosting site is a fully accredited and secure List X site. In addition, the System Administrators will be DV cleared.

What if the applicant does not have internet access? Can they still submit a paper form?

In the event that an e-Form cannot be submitted a (newly designed) paper form, NSV001 (SC/CTC) or NSV002 (DV), are available via the DBS NSV web site. Even when using the paper forms Sponsors will still need to have registered with DBS NSV. The Cabinet Office has already informed departments that hard copy forms can only be used in extreme circumstances.

How can we check certain criteria, like addresses or nationality, before an e-Form is submitted, in order to satisfy our own conditions?

This will not be possible. The applicant will send the completed e-Form directly to DBS NSV. Any issues with residency/nationality will be flagged up to DBS NSV the moment the case is accepted into Cerberus and the e-Form will not allow an application to be submitted if there are insufficient address details provided (e.g. 5 years for SC, 10 for DV).

How long from initiation of the application on the e-Form portal by the Sponsor do we have before the case is automatically cancelled?

Should the applicant fail to submit their e-Form 42 days after login credentials have been supplied by the Sponsor, Cerberus will automatically alert the sponsor. A further 21 days will then be allowed prior to cancellation.

How and when will the sponsor be informed that the application has been cancelled?

An email address will be required as part of the registration process. This will be used to inform the Sponsor if a case is cancelled.

Will the sponsor be able to see their cases at any stage in the application process and will they be able to identify the application category/status i.e. ‘form outstanding’; ‘form

received' or 'cancelled'. Clarification is also sought as to whether the status of application forms can be filtered into these categories?

Sponsors will be able to see the status of cases that they have sponsored via the e-Form portals using the Application Status Information (ASI) functionality. Exactly what information is to be displayed has still to be decided but at the very least it will be clear if a form has been:

- received
- is being processed or,
- has been cancelled

It will be possible to sort the ASI details by status.

How will the system recognise cases that will require Scottish and Northern Ireland police checks in addition to the normal Police National Computer (PNC) checks?

The business rules inherent in Cerberus have been designed to automatically select these checks where appropriate.

How is the medical consent going to be handled for both SC & DV?

For an NSV001 (SC) the applicant will complete 2 medical questions on their security application. If the applicant answers yes to either question a free-text box will appear prompting for further information. Following submission of the application, a decision will be made as to whether a medical consent form will be required. The medical questions on the new NSV002 DV form will remain largely as they are now, however, the intelligent e-Form will present a medical consent form depending on the answers given. The applicants presented with a form will then need to print, sign and send the consent form to DBS NSV. Regardless of the level of clearance, where a medical consent form is required, a hard copy must be provided as most doctors will not accept a form without an original signature.

Under what circumstances will a Financial Questionnaire (FQ) be required and what is the process for sending them out? Will there be any validation of the financial details provided?

When an applicant completes an e-Form NSV001 (SC) questionnaire, a set of business rules will validate their address history and if they do not have sufficient UK addresses to meet the requirements (such as overseas addresses or barrack addresses) they will be seamlessly presented with an FQ which will be submitted as part of the e-Form.

DBS NSV will send out an FQ for any SC applications submitted using the paper form where the equivalent circumstances apply. The FQ is already built into the NSV002 (DV) form. Other than for circumstances described above, there are a number of new financial questions on the NSV001 (SC) that the applicant is asked to complete. If 'yes' is answered to a question, a free-text box will appear prompting further information. Once submitted, a Case Worker will view the form details and request an FQ if required. Where an applicant's email address is known the FQ will be sent electronically. At present the FQ does not contain any form of validation as the range of information can vary so much that putting constraints on the information would be impractical.

Can e-Forms be pre-populated with data from a subject's previous clearance, and if so with which details?

There is no pre-population of previously provided subject data onto the e-Forms. While pre-population is technically feasible, and was a functionality we hoped to build into Cerberus, it has not been possible to identify a solution that allows significant pre-population at the same time as fulfilling the required security standards.

MOD Specific

If JPA/HRMS are updated incorrectly, who is responsible for amending the record?

It is DBS NSV's responsibility to fix incorrectly updated vetting information.

How often is JPA updated?

DBS NSV updates JPA on a weekly basis.

How are cases referred to Risk Managers?

When it has been identified that a case is to be referred to a Risk Manager, a referral task will be added to the case which will then highlight the case to the appropriate area for them to make a decision.

How does the system work with the different layers of Detachment Officer, PVRO, and Commanding Officer etc?

Cerberus is a "roles and permissions" based system that will provide access to the areas of the system that are required. The majority of users outside of DBS NSV will only require access to the e-Form portal to initiate and complete vetting applications. Currently it is only the MOD Risk Managers that will have direct access to the Case Management System and only for the customer group for which they have responsibility.

If a DV clearance expires does Cerberus have the capacity to update the SC?

When a DV clearance expires for MOD service or civilian employees without being renewed, and Cerberus has not been informed by JPA or HRMS that the subject has terminated their employment then Cerberus will automatically grant an SC for the balance of 10 years from when the DV was granted. JPA and HRMS will be updated accordingly.

Other Government Departments (OGD) & MOD Trading Fund Specific

Can DBS NSV manage our aftercare requirements for us and will there be a charge?

Aftercare will relate directly to the Joint Business Agreement (JBA), just as it is now.

What information do Case Management System (CMS) users see?

Users will be able to see all information, attachments and checks pertaining to their own cases. Vetting Status Information (VSI), which is high level details of an individual's clearance, will also be available through the CMS.

What happens in a more tailored approach? If a case with only a few activities is required can this be supplied? For example a customer may only want an interview and the PNC check, and the other checks they will do themselves.

Cerberus can provide a bespoke service to OGD/NDPB customers.

Do "spent" convictions (i.e. convictions that have lapsed) come back as part of the PNC check? If so, will this be shown in the PNC report?

PNC responses will be the same as they are now. Only the method of obtaining them will change, not the content.

What level of information will be transferred from our current database to the new DBS NSV database? Will historic records be transferred?

It has been agreed with the Cabinet Office that any existing NSV data will not be transferred to DBS NSV for lifting to Cerberus at the implementation stage. There is, however, an understanding that to enable a single NSV Database across government, data will eventually need to be transferred. This issue will be reviewed towards the end of this financial year.

What training is available to potential CMS users?

Prior to individual issue of the CMS, users will be provided with training here in York. The training is about a day and is required to ensure that CMS users understand the system and security protocols.