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**Screening of individuals working in a
secure environment – Code of practice**

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Contents

	Page
Foreword	ii
Introduction	1
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 Top management commitment	3
5 Risk management	3
6 Individuals employed in screening	3
6.1 General	3
6.2 Training	4
6.3 Outsourced screening	4
7 Screening process	4
7.1 General	4
7.2 Administration	5
7.3 Provision of information	5
7.4 Preliminary checks	7
7.5 Conditional employment	9
7.6 Period allowed for completion of full screening for individuals in conditional employment	10
7.7 Completion of screening (verification of information)	10
7.8 Review of screening progress	12
8 Subcontractors	12
9 Ancillary staff	13
10 Acquisitions and transfers	13
11 Records	13
11.1 Records of those unsuccessful at preliminary screening	13
11.2 Records held during employment	13
11.3 Records held after cessation of employment	13
Annex A (informative) Example forms	14
Bibliography	21

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, and inside front cover, pages i to iv, pages 1 to 21, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 30 September 2019. It was prepared by Technical Committee GW/3, *Private security management and services*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes BS 7858:2012, which will be withdrawn on 31 March 2020.

Information about this document

This is a full revision of the standard, and introduces the following principal changes:

- the scope has been widened to allow this British Standard to be used effectively in other industries outside of the recognized security sector for any employees undertaking work in a secure environment;
- there is now more emphasis on risk assessment and this is a theme that runs through the standard;
- there is now a clear objective to obtain pertinent background information to enable organizations to make an informed decision, based on risk, on employing an individual in a secure environment;
- there is more importance placed on the role of top management in the screening process, i.e. in deploying appropriate resource to ensure the process is effective and taking responsibility for the acceptance of risk (while top management remains responsible for the execution of the provisions of this British Standard, it is recognized that authority can be delegated to competent individuals to undertake specific tasks);
- it has been clarified that the organization retains ultimate responsibility for an outsourced screening process and is required to review the completed screening file;
- there is a recognition of the role of automation;
- the requirement for character references has been removed as this was seen to be too easy to abuse;
- while social media and other open source internet checks are now mentioned, they are not a provision of the standard and can only be used as additional information in any employment decisions. Care is to be taken when using this method so as not to introduce any unlawful discrimination; and
- the forms in [Annex A](#) are now informative and are therefore examples of forms that could be used, which allows organizations to customize them more easily.

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Where websites and webpages have been cited, they are provided for ease of reference and are correct at the time of publication. The location of a webpage or website, or its contents, cannot be guaranteed.

Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this British Standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Where words have alternative spellings, the preferred spelling of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is used (e.g. “organization” rather than “organisation”).

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

Introduction

This British Standard provides organizations who engage individuals working in a secure environment with a methodology to reduce risk exposure in terms of their human resources and to give a high level of confidence in recruiting and the setting to work of individuals.

This methodology of screening individuals takes a top down approach, i.e. responsibility for this process remains with top management. Top management can delegate accountability for certain roles and tasks; however, they remain responsible for this process.

This methodology is driven by risk and it is incumbent on the organization to apply risk management good practice when deciding how this methodology is implemented into their organization's processes so that it consistently delivers the desired outcomes.

It is important that the organization ensures that all individuals employed in the screening process (see [Clause 6](#)), and those with the authority to offer employment, maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in view of the special circumstances of the environment in which they are employed.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for the screening of individuals working in a secure environment where the security and/or safety of people, goods and services, data or property is a requirement of the employing organization's operations and/or where such screening is in the public interest.

NOTE 1 "Property" includes intellectual and physical property as well as cash and valuables.

NOTE 2 Some insurers require BS 7858 as a part of the policy conditions and have additional requirements for screening, e.g. a longer screening period.

This British Standard applies equally to all individuals in relevant employment, including full-time and part-time employees, sole traders, partnerships, temporary and permanent employees, and to all levels of seniority, including directors. The objective of screening is to obtain sufficient information to enable organizations to make an informed decision on employing an individual in a secure environment.

This British Standard does not cover the other elements of recruitment and selection that take place when employing people. It is assumed that screening would be an additional process added to existing recruitment and selection processes, for example this British Standard does not cover the application process, right to work status or specific competency in the job role.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 ancillary staff

individual(s) involved in support activities

NOTE Examples of support activities include administration, personnel, building maintenance and cleaning.