



Te Tira Tiaki

Government Communications
Security Bureau



Te Pā Whakamarumaru

New Zealand Security
Intelligence Service

Secretly we're just like you

**Demystifying working
in the NZIC**



What are the key things I need to be mindful of before applying/coming to work here?

We're just like other workplaces, but have some key differences:

- **Talking about where you work:** we don't openly tell people where we work. You'll be able to tell people you trust to be discreet. For example close family/ friends and loved ones. But you won't be able to tell them everything you do.
- **Physical work environment:** our workspaces have blinds down all day. This is so we can protect our people and the information we work with.

- **Remote working:** most of us need to work in our offices. Depending on the role, you may be able to do some work from home. Ask about this during the recruitment process.
- **International travel:** before you book overseas travel, you'll need to share your plans with us. This is so we can provide the right advice and support to you.
- **Social media:** you can use social media, but need to be mindful of what you share. This is to keep you, your colleagues, and your whanau safe. We don't post anything about work on our personal profiles. This includes LinkedIn too.

What sort of support is there for staff at GCSB and NZSIS?

We have a range of staff groups and networks who support our people. And staff can set up new ones if they want.

We also have a number of wellbeing offerings that focus on the holistic wellbeing of our people.



Will I be able to tell my family where I work?

Yes, if you want to. Only tell people you trust to be discreet about where you work. This is to keep you, your colleagues and your whanau safe. We ask you to be sensible about how many people you tell.

Once you tell someone, you can't un-tell them. And you don't know who they might tell. They may be immensely proud and might not realise the impact of not being discreet.



Will I have to lie to my family about my job?

No you won't. But you won't be able to tell them everything about what you do, who you work with, etc., either.

What should I tell my [old work mates/ friends/colleagues] about where I'm going to work?

We'll advise you what to say when you apply to work for us.

I've told people that I have an interview with GCSB/NZSIS/NZIC – is that an issue? Will it affect my ability to get a clearance?

No, people apply and interview for jobs all the time. If you leave it, most people won't mention it again. If they do bring it up you can

tell them you either didn't get the role or start to deploy your personal cover – see answer on page 7.

I've been asked to provide referees for my application. What do I tell them?

Be honest with anyone involved in your application. Only tell them what they need to know.

You might tell your:

- Recruitment referees
"I've applied for a new role in a government department (or the security sector). The recruitment team will call you to discuss the referee process".

- Vetting referees
"The new role I'm applying for requires a security clearance. This is normal for many government roles. I was asked to provide some names of people who know me well, and I think that's you. You'll be sent a form to fill out that with lots of questions about me. It's just part of the clearance process".



I've been asked to provide my current manager as a referee, but don't want them to know I have been offered/looking for a new role – can I use a previous manager or someone else?

Ideally, we'd like your current manager. They can provide a recent snapshot of your skills and experience.

Sometimes a current manager won't be practical for you. If so, chat to our recruitment team. They'll help find the best option for you. You can contact them at careers@nzic.govt.nz.



What is the process for getting a security clearance?

The security clearance process has two parts: an online form, and an in-person interview. We ask you questions about your past to understand the kind of person you are. We'll ask you about your family, your relationships and partners, the social

groups you're connected to, your financial situation, where you've lived, where you've travelled, and other questions about your lifestyle. We then make a professional assessment about your suitability to have a clearance.

Why do you need to collect so much information about me? How will my information be used?

The questions we ask may feel personal, but they're necessary. They help us identify any potential vulnerabilities you may have so that we can better

support and protect you. Any information you provide will be held in strict confidence by the Vetting Team. Your new manager won't have access to this information.

What should I tell my referees for my security clearance? And if my referees need to provide other referees what should they say?

Be honest, but only tell them what they need to know. You might say *"The new role I'm applying for requires a security clearance. This is normal for many government roles. I was asked to provide some names of people who know me well,*

and I think that's you. You'll be sent a form that will ask lots of questions about me. It's just part of the clearance process. If you're asked to provide other referees for me, you can tell them what I've told you".

Do my security clearance referees need to have known me for 15 years?

No. For your work manager and work colleague they need to have known you for at least two years. Your social/friend referees need to have known you for at least five years.

Some/one of my family members has had a criminal conviction - will this affect my ability to get a clearance?

No. It may simply require us to implement additional protections, mitigations, and support for you.



I have previous convictions / am involved in a current legal dispute / used drugs – will this affect my ability to get a clearance?

Not necessarily. Everyone has different backgrounds and experiences. We'll get a better understanding of your situation during the clearance process. What is most important is that

you're open and honest with us. We'll then explore ways to implement additional protections, mitigations, and support for you if you're granted a clearance.

Will mental health conditions or neurodivergence stop me from getting a clearance?

In most cases, no it will not stop you from getting a clearance. It is important that you provide your Vetting Officer with as much information

as possible to help us understand your situation. If you're offered a role we'll work with you to understand how best to support you here.

I've lived overseas, or am from XYZ country, will I still be able to get a clearance?

Having lived overseas or coming from another country does not exclude you. We need to be able to check your background for up to

15 years. If we can't do this, it may mean you can't get a clearance right now. If you're concerned about this you should talk to us.



How does a vetting interview work?

We'll set up a time to meet with you face to face or virtually. We'll ask you a range of questions and explore the answers to some of your

online questionnaire a little further. We'll also provide you with an indication of what happens after your interview.

How long does a vetting interview take?

This really depends on you and your background. It can take anywhere between 1.5 to 3+ hours.

How can I prepare for my vetting interview?

You can't really. Try to relax, be honest, and remember that everyone has a past. The Vetting Officer has heard it all before.

When you're in the Vetting interview they aren't trying

to catch you out. It's an opportunity to talk freely and frankly about your past, and to talk about the things that have happened in your life. The interview is highly confidential, and your personal privacy is paramount.



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Careers

Check out beyondordinary.nzic.govt.nz
for more info

Any questions?

Contact careers@nzic.govt.nz



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