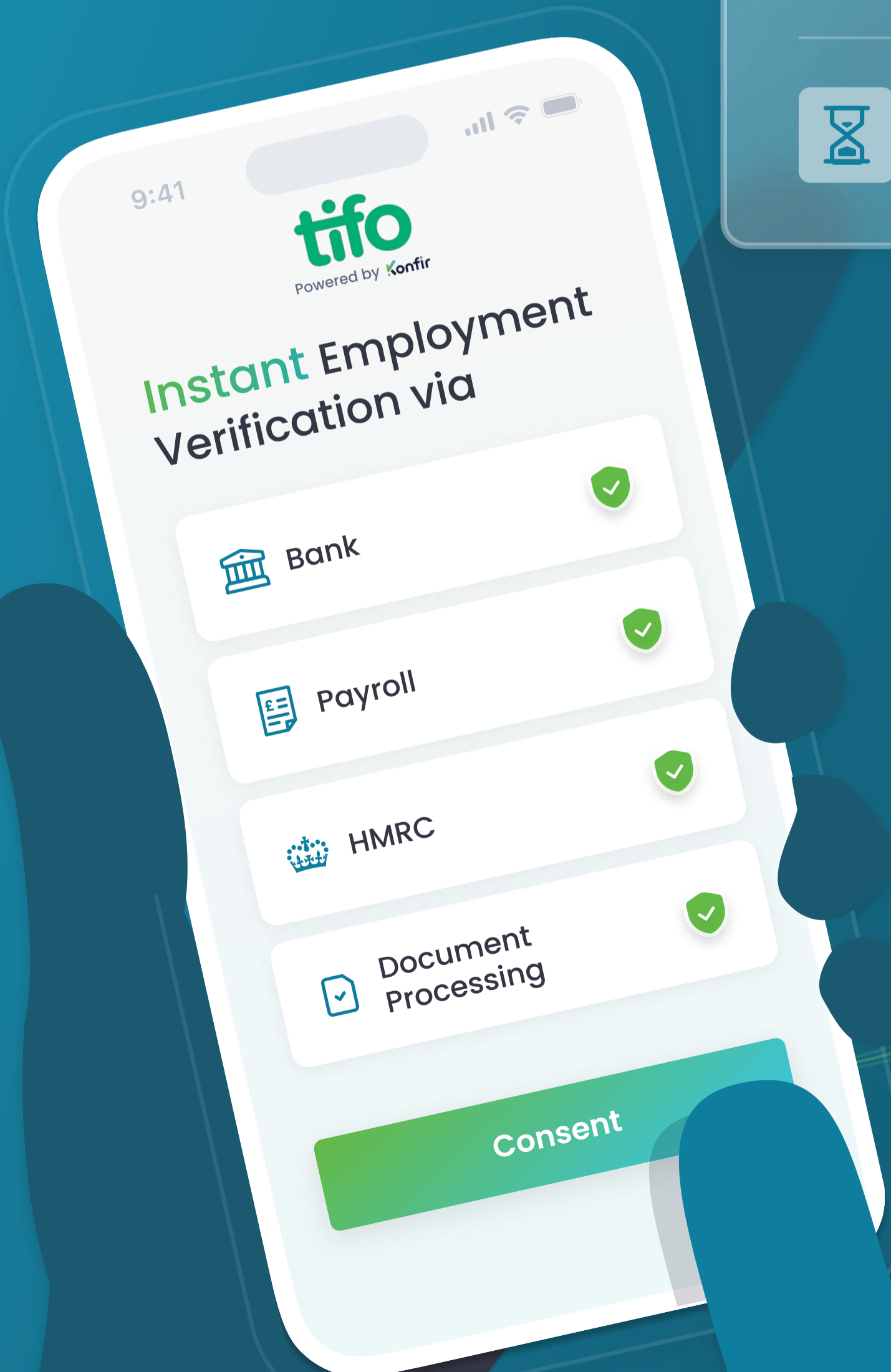


Compliance with BPSS

How you can use Instant Employment data



Profile card showing verification status:

- Current Employment:
- Historical Employment:
- Gaps in Employment:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

BPSS: Overview	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information required under the BPSS• Why is this standard important?• Who is the standard for?	
BPSS: The Challenges	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• References are not actually mandated under BPSS• Employee consent	
Optimising the Process	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using instant data to comply• Step by step: how Konfir speeds up BPSS screening• Transforming Screening Process	
BPSS 2024 Update: Employment History Verification	11
The Way Forward	14

BPSS: Overview

With so many acronyms, standards, and emerging technologies in employment screening, it can take time to understand how they all fit together. In the UK, many background check standards are designed to provide best practices for organisations onboarding new staff – and for some industries or roles, these standards are a legal requirement.

The **Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS)** is one such standard. It is the mandatory pre-employment screening process for employees working in or with UK Government departments. The most important asset in any organisation is its people, and applying the BPSS helps ensure that organisations are hiring people who are entitled to work in the UK and who possess the honesty, integrity, and values needed for government-related work. Its purpose is to protect government assets and minimise the risk to national security. Beyond the mandatory requirements for government workers, BPSS is also commonly used as a best-practice standard for private organisations across the country. Throughout this white paper, we refer to the latest version of the standard, **Version** ²



Information required under the BPSS

The BPSS comprises verification of four main elements (checks). In addition, candidates must provide an account of any significant time spent abroad during the vetting period. The four core checks are:



Identity Verification

Confirm the candidate's name, date of birth, address, and National Insurance number.



Right to Work

Confirm the candidate's nationality and immigration status (the legal right to work in the UK).



Employment History

Verify the candidate's employment history for at least the past 3 years.



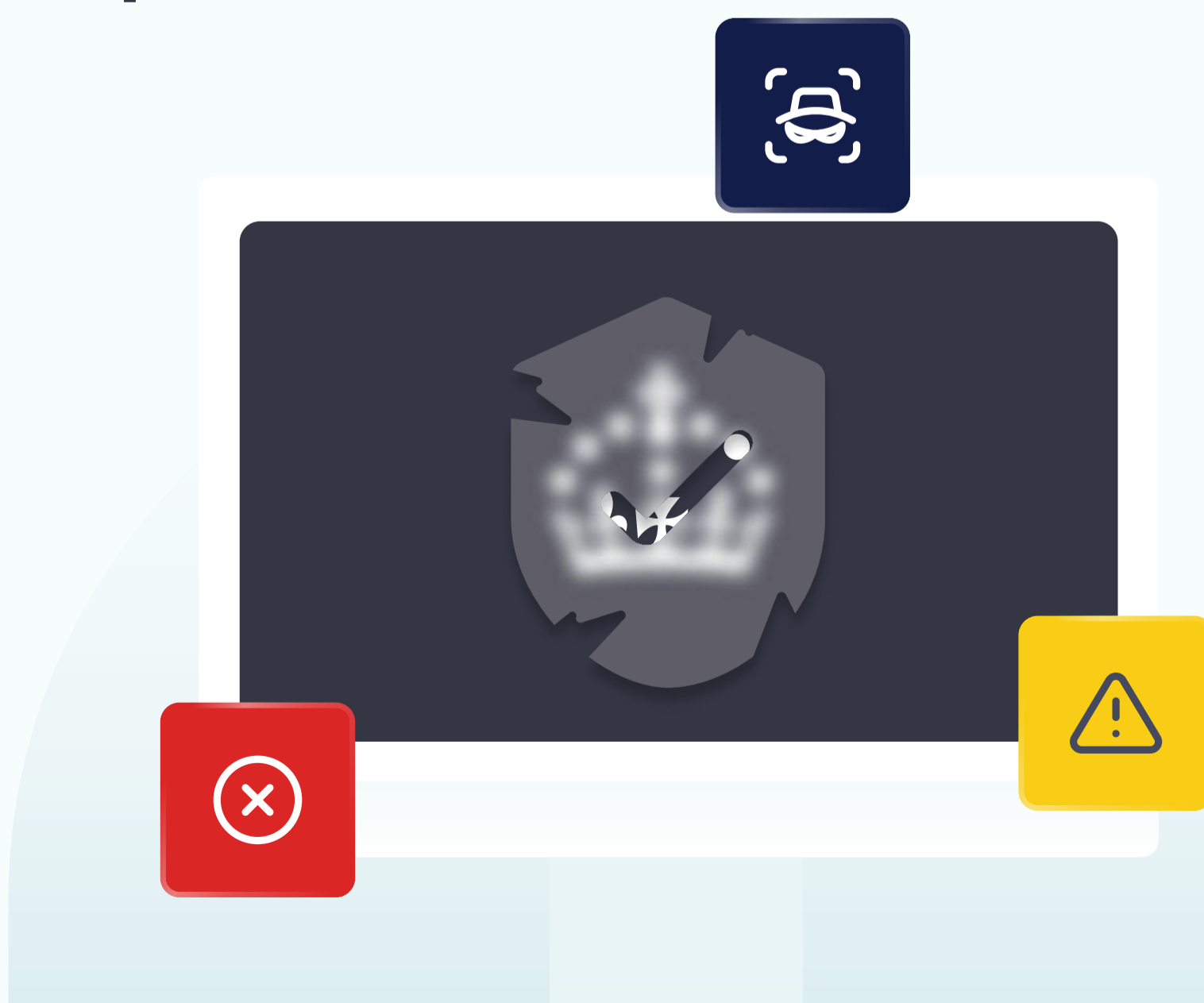
Criminal Record

Check for any unspent criminal convictions.

Note: Candidates are also required to give a reasonable account of any significant periods of time (periods greater than 6 months) spent abroad or otherwise not in active employment within the last 3 years, so that overseas stays or Gaps in Employment can be understood and addressed as part of the screening.

Why is this standard important?

The BPSS and its guidance describe the mandatory pre-employment controls needed to tackle identity fraud, illegal working, and general deception. These checks address risks that could seriously damage an organisation's reputation, integrity, or security – and may even expose more serious national security concerns if left unchecked.



Failure to perform thorough pre-employment screening could lead to reputational harm or even more serious business or security damage. It should also be remembered that without adequately confirming a person's identity and background at the BPSS stage, any subsequent National Security Vetting (NSV) has a weak foundation and offers little assurance. In other words, BPSS is a critical baseline: as part of a holistic security regime (alongside physical and IT security measures), organisations must have appropriate personnel security controls in place before and during employment to reduce the risk of damage, loss, or compromise of sensitive assets.

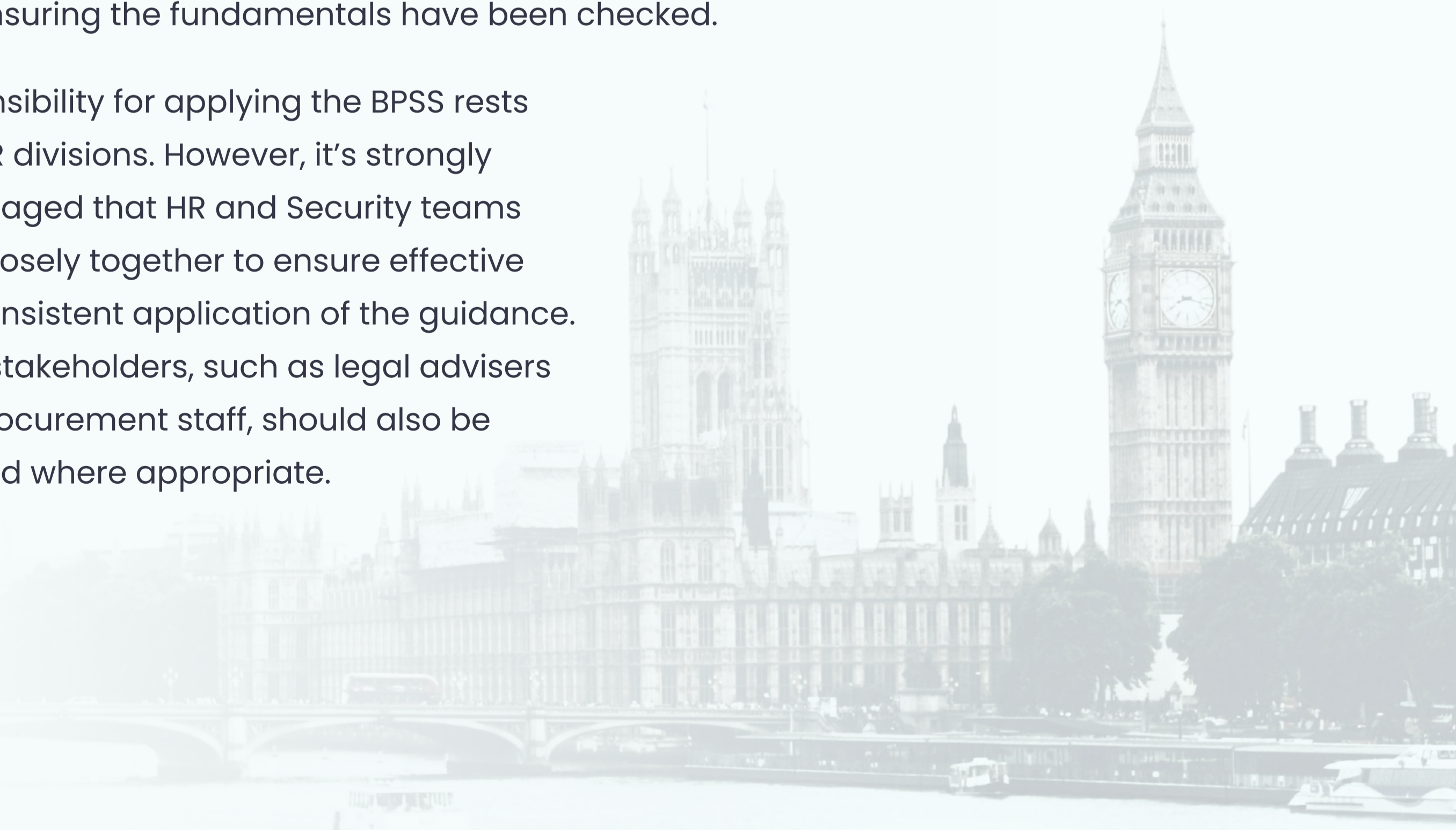
Who is the standard for?

At a minimum, **all staff in government roles** must be screened under the BPSS. Full implementation of the BPSS is explicitly mandated in the UK Government's Security Policy Framework (SPF). This means any civil servant, contractor, member of the armed forces, temporary staff, or supplier working within or for the government should pass BPSS screening before a formal employment offer is confirmed.

The purpose of conducting these rigorous pre-appointment checks is to:

- ✓ **Ensure:** that all new hires are entitled to undertake the employment in question and, where applicable, meet any nationality rules for government service.
- ✓ **Guard against:** the employment of anyone who might be misrepresenting themselves for commercial or personal gain.
- ✓ **Provide a sound basis:** for any subsequent NSV (security clearance) requirements by ensuring the fundamentals have been checked.

Responsibility for applying the BPSS rests with HR divisions. However, it's strongly encouraged that HR and Security teams work closely together to ensure effective and consistent application of the guidance. Other stakeholders, such as legal advisers and procurement staff, should also be involved where appropriate.



BPSS: The challenges

Obtaining **appropriate references** can verify employment history and may also help confirm a person's integrity. However, there is an increasing reluctance on the part of employers to provide honest and timely references on an individual's character or suitability for employment.

Concerns about data protection, potential liability, and simple administrative delays mean that even internal references can be slow or overly cursory. Relying on the traditional route of chasing references can add severe delays to the recruitment process. Thus, collecting and verifying all the data required to comply with BPSS often becomes a challenging and

Providing an employment reference has become somewhat of a minefield for employers, with risks of liability to both the new employer and the previous employer. In general, an employer isn't legally obliged to give a reference at all; if they do, it must be a fair and accurate confirmation of facts (typically just job title and dates of employment). It may include details about a worker's performance or reason for leaving, but such detail is rarely given. Employers must provide a reference only if there was a written agreement to do so, or if they operate in certain regulated industries. Outside of those cases, providing detailed employment

References are not actually mandated under BPSS

Departments and agencies may choose to seek traditional references, but they are not required to according to BPSS guidance. (In fact, as we'll see later, the latest BPSS guidance explicitly allows using digital data sources as an alternative to contacting referees.) Where references are sought, the employer should take additional steps to ensure their validity, for example:

- ✓ **Confirming the source:** If a written reference is provided, call the author to confirm they genuinely provided it. (Importantly, do not rely on a phone number supplied by the candidate – find the official contact details independently.)
- ✓ **Verifying the employer's existence:** Ensure the employer declared by the candidates is a legitimate organisation (e.g. check that the company exists in reputable directories or databases).

Even when obtained, references introduce auditing challenges and potential risks of reference fraud (forged or falsified references). The entire process of gathering references can be cumbersome and prone to delays or gaps.

Employee consent

Under BPSS, the candidate must consent to their background being checked. Only once the individual gives permission can a verifier proceed to confirm their information. The tricky thing is, there's no standardised way across industry to capture an employee's consent – methods range from physical letters, to emails, to phone call confirmations. The problem with this patchwork approach is that it's slow, costly, and often ambiguous. Even with modern email automation, employment referencing turnaround times are still often measured in days or weeks – if the references come back at all. The UK employment screening industry today employs thousands of screening executives whose job is to chase down references every day.

The existing process doesn't work well for anyone involved. candidates are forced to jump through hoops to obtain and forward documents or referee contacts. Employers (both current and previous) face a costly administrative burden of responding to checks. And verifiers end up managing a manual, cumbersome, and expensive process. Although these checks happen consistently, the process hasn't improved in decades due to a combination of technical limitations, a lack of clear regulatory guidance, and the interdependence between all parties involved.

Optimising the process

Across the board, verifications of all types have moved into the digital age – and for good reason. Not only is the process faster and lower in cost, but it's also fundamentally safer for all parties involved. In the case of BPSS, this means the employer, the candidate, and the verifier all benefit from improved security. The updated BPSS guidance itself now recommends the use of digital verification systems to streamline these checks.

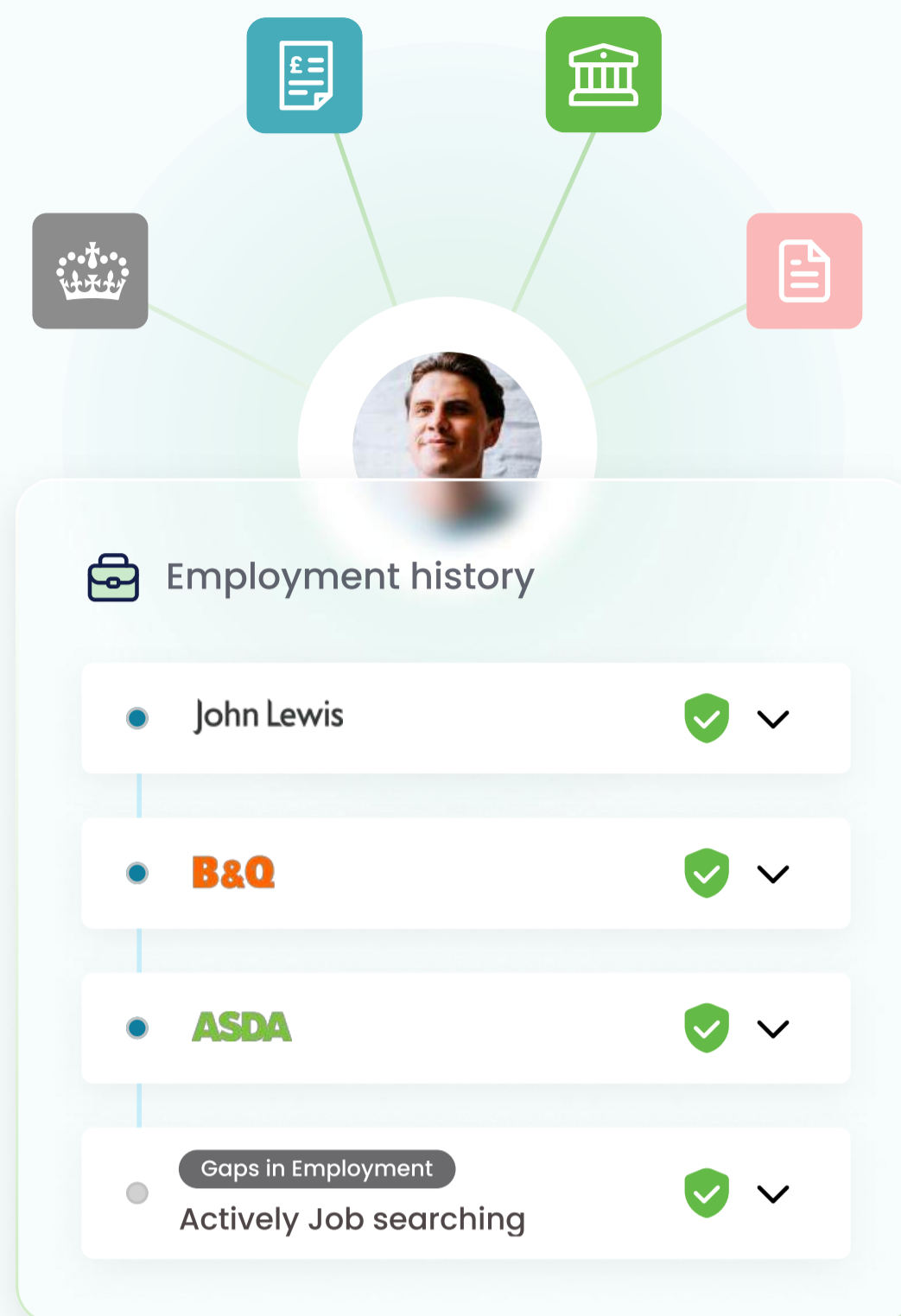
By tapping into direct data sources to instantly collect the required information with the candidate's consent, employers can streamline operations and get candidates into their roles faster.

This digital approach eliminates the friction of waiting on third parties and delays in verification, helping maintain compliance with BPSS without slowing down hiring. It also removes opportunities for fraud (since data comes directly from trusted sources, not from easily falsified documents) and virtually guarantees that the required information is obtained. The result is a more standardised, safer, and faster process – with reduced operational expenses.



Using instant data to comply

Modern technology now makes it possible to verify employment history instantly and securely. Konfir is simplifying and securing the BPSS compliance process by combining data from authoritative sources – including HMRC, Payroll systems, Open Banking, and Document Processing with fraud checks built in to verify candidate’s employment history and any gaps in employment. By leveraging these trusted data sources, Konfir provides a more agile way to get employment verifications done in a secure, compliant, and reliable manner.

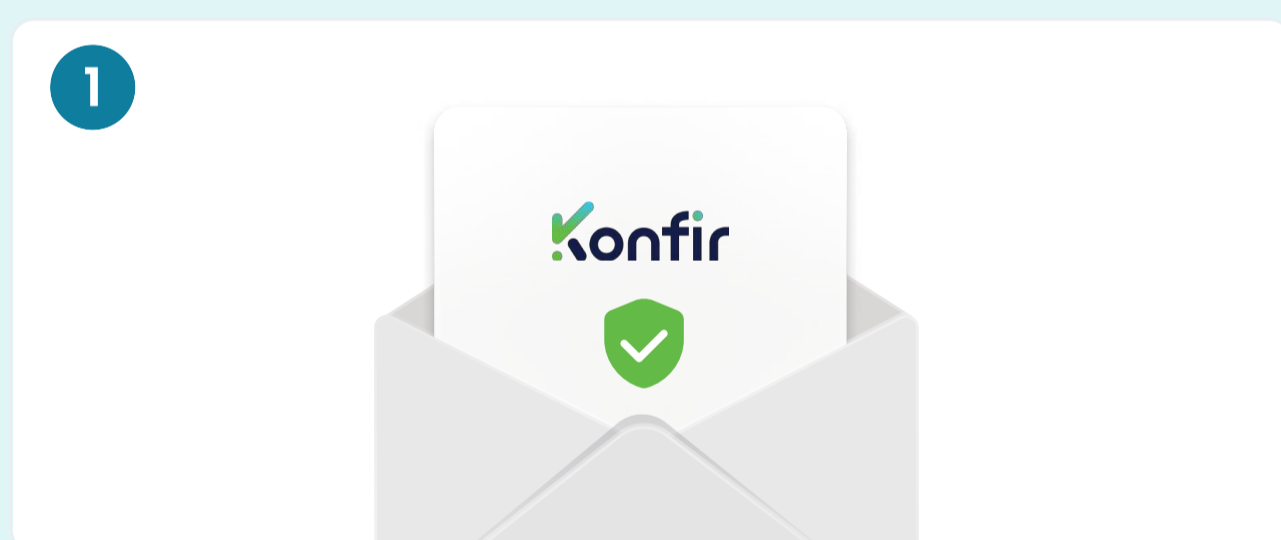


Konfir is a certified Attribute Service Provider (ASP) under the UK’s Digital Identity & Attributes Trust Framework (DIATF). This means Konfir’s methods and data sources have been externally audited and approved to government standards for accuracy, security, and reliability. As a DIATF-certified provider of employment attributes, Konfir only sources data from authoritative channels that are deemed accurate, reliable, and secure. Questionable documentation or candidate evasiveness – factors that commonly raise BPSS compliance concerns – are eliminated, because Konfir pulls data directly from the source rather than relying on potentially unreliable paperwork or slow human references.

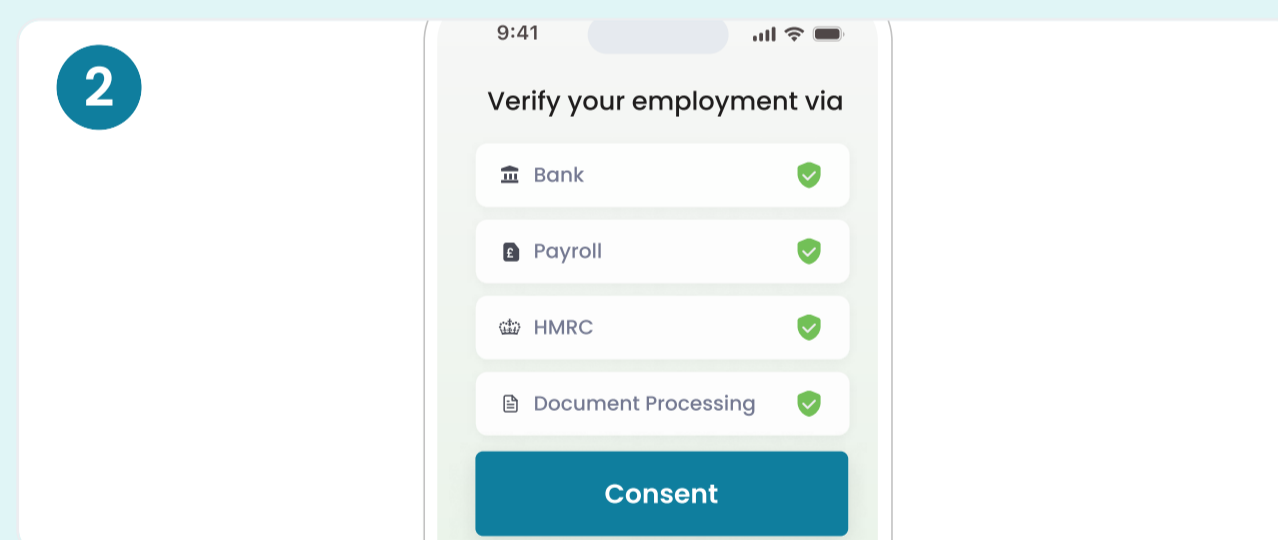
All data provided through Konfir is accessed one time only via secure API at the point of request, and the data shared is minimised to only what is necessary for the check. Candidates can feel comfortable using Konfir, knowing that no irrelevant personal information (such as detailed spending data or income amounts) is shared unless absolutely needed for the verification.

Here's how the process works: after a verifier (e.g. an employer or screening provider) creates a verification request, the candidate is directed to Konfir's platform to provide their consent and connect their data. The candidate can securely authorise a connection to data source(s) of their choosing; all in a seamless digital workflow. If the connection is successful, the candidate's employment data for the required period is automatically aggregated, analysed, and normalised using Konfir's proprietary algorithms. It is then matched to their declared employment history so that discrepancies become incredibly easy to spot.

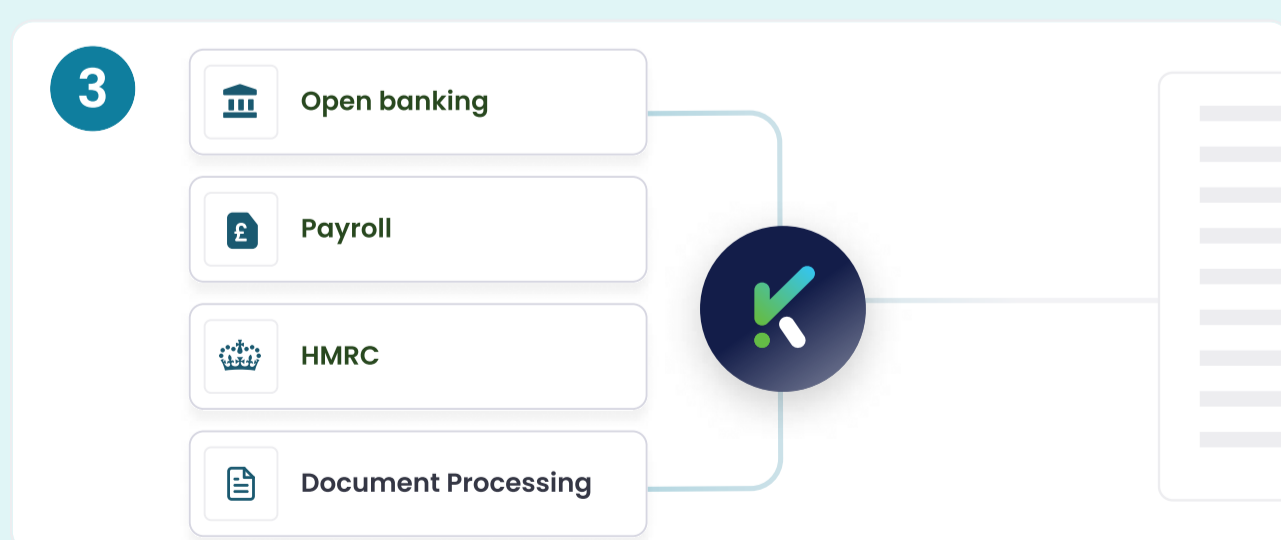
Step by step: how Konfir speeds up BPSS screening



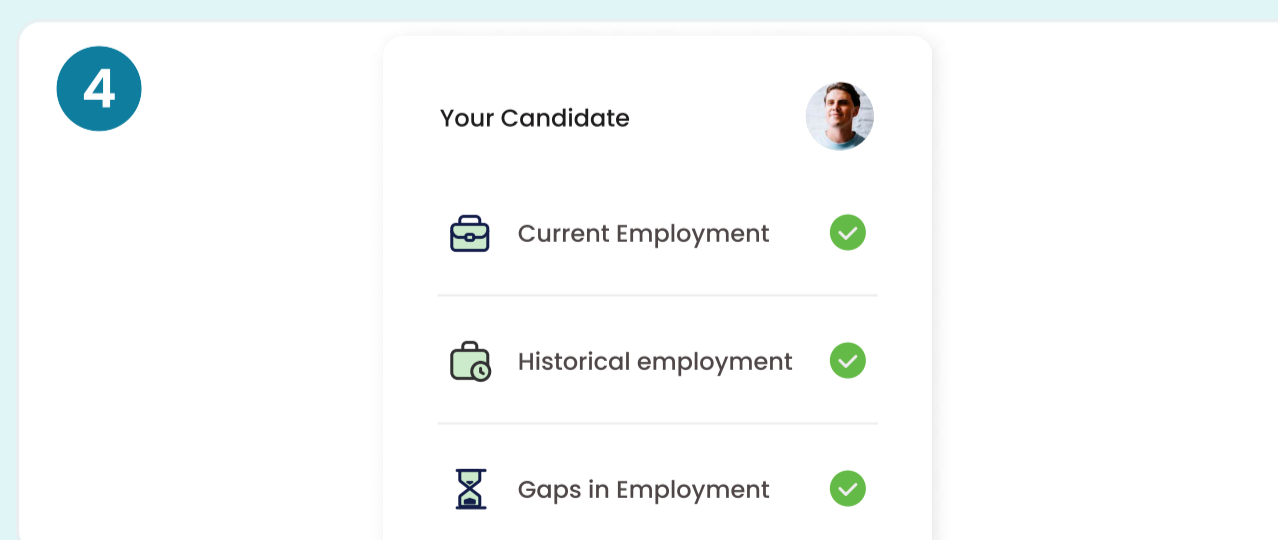
The candidate accesses Konfir via a secure link (either directly, or as part of another onboarding workflow).



The candidate consents and authorises Konfir to retrieve data via Open Banking, Payroll, HMRC, and Documents where applicable.



Konfir instantly collects the relevant information and tailors the output to the verifier's needs.



The verified employment data is instantly shared with the verifier.

Transforming Screening Process

2-3 mins

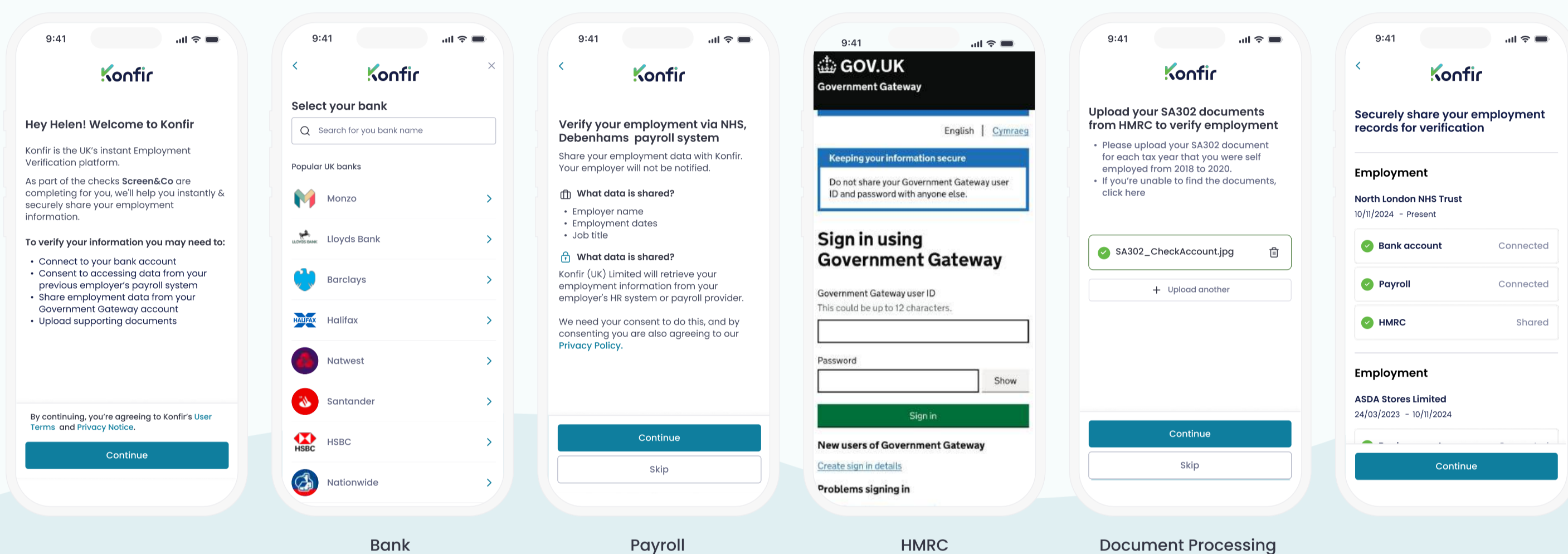
Average time for an candidate to complete the Konfir data sharing process.

80%

Candidate conversion rate (the majority of candidates successfully complete the digital flow).

80%

Of candidates complete within **30 minutes** of getting the request



Bank

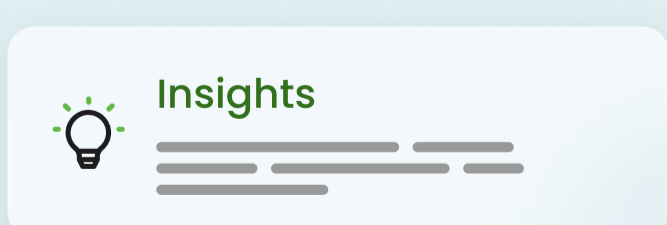
Payroll

HMRC

Document Processing

Instant

Data returned instantly via API (meaning verifiers can get results in real-time).



Your Candidate

Employment Timeline

Employment Period	Employer	Status
27/11/2024 - Present	North London NHS Trust	✔ Konfir Verified
24/03/2023 - 10/11/2024	ASDA Stores Limited	✔ Konfir Verified
10/08/2022 - 24/03/2023	B&Q	✔ Konfir Verified
10/08/2019 - 13/03/2020	Gap in Employment	✔ Konfir Verified

Minor discrepancy detected: start date
The declared start date and the verified start date differ by 17 days

	Konfir data	Declared data
	Source: Payroll HMRC	
Employer Name	North London NHS Trust	North London NHS Trust
Start Date	27/11/2024	10/11/2024 ⚠
End Date	Present	Present
Full Name	Helen Murphy	Helen Murphy
National Insurance No.	QQ123456C	QQ123456C
Job Title	Senior Account Executive	Senior Account Executive

Sources Nationwide

Financial Support Received ✔
Minimum Income Guarantee received 10/08/2019 to 13/03/2020

Actively Job Seeking ✔
Job Seeker's Allowance received 10/08/2019 to 13/03/2020

BPSS 2024 update

Employment history verification

The UK Government released updated BPSS guidance (Version 7.0) in June 2024 to provide clearer policy and instructions on pre-employment checks. One of the most welcome improvements in the new guidance is the use of consistent language to distinguish between what is mandatory and what is advisory. In the BPSS documentation, the term “shall” denotes a mandatory requirement, “should” denotes a recommended (advisory) practice, and “can” denotes an optional capability or possibility. This clarity helps organisations understand exactly what must be done versus what should or can be done to meet the standard.

Importantly, the new guidance has also evolved to encourage the use of modern digital techniques for verifying backgrounds. This is clearly stated in the Employment History check. In essence, the only definitive requirement is that (employers “shall”) at least 3 years of a candidate’s employment (and/or academic) history must be verified.

Notably, the guidance does not mandate how this verification is to be carried out – it simply states that it can be done via digital sources, which include HMRC PAYE records or by obtaining employer references. These are given as two possible methods, but they are not exhaustive. In practice, this means organisations are free to use other reliable data sources or services to fulfil the requirement, so long as the 3-year history is verified. The BPSS update explicitly acknowledges this flexibility: HMRC and references are mentioned as examples, but since they are presented as possibilities rather than the only allowed methods, using trusted digital data from payroll systems or banking records is equally acceptable for meeting the verification requirement.



To summarise the Employment History check under BPSS Version 7.0 (June 2024):

<p>Mandatory (Shall)</p>	<p>Verify the individual’s disclosed employment history (and/or academic history/qualifications, if applicable) covering a minimum of the last 3 years.</p> <p>If the individual was self-employed during the period, you must verify their self-employment history as well – confirming the dates and the status of their business (for example, through official evidence from HMRC, bank/accountant records, or client references).</p> <p>If you choose to use referees for this check, you must also advise the individual that by providing reference contact information, they are giving consent for those referees to be contacted (in other words, references should not be contacted without the individual’s permission).</p>
<p>Recommended (Should)</p>	<p>Obtain evidence to explain any significant gaps in employment, defined as gaps of 6 months or more (continuous or cumulative) within the past 3 years. For example, if the candidate had a long period of unemployment or time outside the workforce, you should seek references or documentation (such as proof of travel, education, training, or other activities) to cover those gaps. (The previous 2018 guidance recommended investigating gaps over 3 months; the new standard has relaxed this to gaps over 6 months, reflecting a more reasonable threshold). If an organisation has a particularly low risk tolerance, they can choose to investigate smaller gaps or extend the gap-check beyond 3 years, but 6+ months in 3 years is the baseline recommendation.</p>
<p>Optional (Can)</p>	<p>Use HMRC PAYE data or employer references as evidence of employment history. The new BPSS explicitly allows either of these methods (and even notes that an HMRC employment record printout/PDF provided by the candidate is an acceptable form of proof).</p>

Comparison of BPSS v7.0 Employment History Check vs. Konfir's Approach

Criteria	BPSS Definition	What Konfir Does
Mandatory (Shall)	<p>Must verify at least 3 years of the candidate's employment and/or academic history.</p> <p>Self-employment must also be verified with official evidence.</p> <p>References may only be contacted with candidate consent.</p>	<p>Konfir verifies minimum 3 years (and up to 6 years) of employment/academic history using trusted digital sources (HMRC, payroll, banking data).</p> <p>It ensures self-employment is verified through official records.</p> <p>No need to contact employers directly, safeguarding candidate consent.</p>
Recommended (Should)	<p>Organisations should obtain evidence for gaps of 6+ months within the past 3 years (e.g., unemployment, study, travel).</p> <p>Previous rule was 3 months, now relaxed.</p>	<p>Konfir automatically flags >6-month gaps and prompts candidates/verifiers to provide explanations (evidence of travel, training, etc).</p> <p>This ensures organisations can easily comply with the advisory requirement.</p>
Optional (Can)	<p>Organisations can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use HMRC PAYE or employer references as evidence • Accept HMRC employment record PDFs provided by candidates • Extend history checks beyond 3 years • Investigate smaller gaps if risk profile requires 	<p>Konfir leverages HMRC PAYE data wherever possible, supplements with payroll and bank data, and supports extending checks beyond 3 years (up to 6 years).</p> <p>It also uncovers undeclared employment and provides flexible checks based on organisational risk appetite.</p>

In practice, Konfir's platform addresses all of these points by design, making it straightforward for employers to comply with the BPSS requirements. It fulfills the "shall" by verifying at least 3 (and up to 6) years of employment history through trusted data sources, without relying on paper references. It naturally handles the "should" by automatically identifying any >6-month gaps in the timeline and prompting the candidate (or verifier) to provide evidence or explanation for those periods. And it takes advantage of everything that "can" be done: using HMRC's authoritative records whenever available, along with payroll and Open Banking data, and covering additional history beyond 3 years if

needed to give a complete picture. In other words, Konfir's solution exceeds the baseline - it can go back as far as 6 years into a career if required, ensuring that any period of employment (even if initially undeclared by the candidate) can be discovered and verified, and that any gaps are clearly flagged and accounted for. Crucially, all of this is done with the candidate's knowledge and consent, and without the need to contact current or previous employers directly. This means organisations can meet the BPSS shall/should obligations in a way that is not only faster, but also more secure and privacy-friendly than the traditional reference-check approach.

The way forward

By using Konfir's instant employment verification, employers can dramatically cut down the turnaround time for BPSS screening. This improves their operations and reduces the time and costs associated with pre-employment checks. The data returned by Konfir is categorised and standardised, delivered through a platform that easily integrates into existing workflows (no complex IT integration required for the verifier). On the candidate side, the user experience is also vastly improved: Konfir provides a clearer, simpler, and safer way for individuals to share their information, eliminating confusion and stress from the screening process.

Konfir offers a secure, consistent, and commercially viable way for employers and screening providers to complete employment history checks quickly – without ever needing to contact a previous employer. As a government-trusted service (certified under the UK DIATF), Konfir meets all the security and data-handling standards expected in modern digital identity solutions. This gives organisations confidence that using Konfir not only accelerates their BPSS compliance, but also upholds the high integrity and accuracy standards that the BPSS is designed to ensure.



BPSS



If your organisation struggles with the cost or delay of traditional employment referencing, you can begin saving time and money immediately by switching to Konfir’s digital process.



If your organisation already uses workarounds or partial digital solutions to speed up employment checks, Konfir gives you a more complete way to directly access the same information and more – including insights and a comparison to declared data – all in one place.



If your organisation still relies exclusively on contacting previous employers (the classic “CPE” model) you’re probably only getting basic confirmation references (and getting them slowly if at all). Konfir provides a fast and thorough way to obtain verified employment data, covering everything a standard reference would include and more in a fraction of the time.

You too can meet BPSS requirements efficiently while reducing the time and administrative effort involved in screening. A digital, data-led approach brings clarity, consistency and speed to employment history checks, making compliance a smoother and more predictable part of the onboarding process.

