

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

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Alternative Formats

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Introduction

This Recruitment and Selection Procedure (R&S Procedure) must be read in conjunction with PBNI's R&S Policy and associated policies, procedures and guidance.

All staff who take part in a decision making or advisory capacity in a R&S process must have received PBNI's recruitment and selection training including training on equality issues.

Recruitment and Selection Process Stages

The normal process for the management of a R&S process will be as follows:

Stage 1	Vacancy Identification and Approval to recruit
Stage 2	R&S Panel Selection Arrangements
Stage 3	Advertisement
Stage 4	Shortlisting
Stage 5	Selection process after shortlisting
Stage 6	Post interview

The Head of HR and OD, or their nominee, the People / HR Manager will be responsible for overseeing the overall efficient management of R&S campaigns, that have been approved by the Workforce Planning Group or Chief Executive.

1. Stage 1: Vacancy Identification and Approval to Recruit

1.1 The decision to commence a R&S exercise will be taken by PBNI senior management who on an ongoing basis will review staffing levels, through its Workforce Planning Group.

1.2 Details which will be considered by the Workforce Planning Group will include the post, the reason for the recruitment, the hours of work, location, the contractual arrangement (Permanent / Temporary), how the post will be advertised (Internally / Externally / Both), and when the recruitment may begin.

- 1.3 In taking decisions regarding the approach to advertising, PBNI will have to take account of all relevant factors at that time (e.g., organisational and business needs, diversity issues, specific skills required, urgency of filling a vacancy).
- 1.4 When a recruitment exercise has been approved, a member of the HR / People Partner team will be responsible for coordinating the recruitment process from start to end. They may also participate as an active member of the R&S Panel or act in an advisory capacity throughout.

Initial R&S Panel Meeting

- 1.5 The first task for HR will be to set up the Initial Panel Meeting at which the detail of the Candidate Information Pack will be agreed.
- 1.6 The R&S Panel will normally be selected by the lead recruiting manager or by Head of HR &OD, or the People HR Manager; and the identified R&S Panel should where possible, include the senior member of staff to whom the new appointee would report. This person or another person should have detailed knowledge of the work area for the post to be filled. The R&S Panel may also include a member of HR as either a R&S Panel member or an observer.

Conflict of Interest

- 1.7 As part of the R&S Panel meetings, R&S Panel members will be required to document any conflict of interest, their participation in the recruitment exercise might present, either perceived or actual in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Guidance. They will normally be asked if they are aware of any potential conflict of interest prior to their agreement to become a R&S Panel member, and after the shortlisting process.

Candidate Information Pack

- 1.8 A Candidate Information Pack will be produced by HR in liaison with the manager leading the recruitment and agreed at the Initial R&S meeting. The Pack should include:

- The Job Description
- The Personnel Specification (the essential and desirable criteria for the post)
- Details of
 - Hours of work
 - Location(s) and if post might be suitable for hybrid working
 - If the post is permanent, temporary, or fixed term
 - Advertising date
 - Shortlisting date
 - Closing date for receipt of applications
- Selection method(s)
 - Interview date(s)
- Contact person in PBNI for anyone who wants to find out more about the role advertised or PBNI
- When posts are advertised externally, they will also contain detail of the work of PBNI.
- Any equality statements relevant to attracting underrepresented groups to apply for the post.

2. Stage 2: R&S Panel Arrangements

Make up of R&S Panel

- 2.1 HR will take all reasonable steps to ensure, as far as reasonably possible, that each R&S Panel is balanced in terms of gender and community background. All R&S Panel members are required to have received PBNI's R&S training which must be renewed every three years.
- 2.2 Dependent on the role being advertised, PBNI may also use the expertise of PBNI Board Members, and/or expertise of external bodies/personnel.
- 2.3 The Chair and R&S Panel members shall normally be at least one grade above the position being advertised.

- 2.4 For the appointment of a Chief Executive, normally the panel will consist of members of Sponsor Branch, Board and any other relevant personnel.

Responsibilities of the Chair of the Panel

- 2.5 The Chair of the R&S Panel is accountable for the panel working effectively in the overall R&S process and the selection of appointable candidates.
- 2.6 It is the responsibility of the Chair of the panel to ensure structured questions are produced and agreed with the R&S Panel members in advance of the interview. The Chair will ensure that the questions focus on the skills, knowledge and experience required by the post as outlined in the Person Specification.
- 2.7 The Chair will ensure that the R&S Panel agree the rank order of interviewees and the appointable staff, based on their scores obtained in the interview.
- 2.8 The Chair must ensure that all Interview documentation is completed, and all panel members' documents returned to HR.

Role of R&S Panel Members

- 2.9 The R&S Panel will agree the documentation or any changes to standard documentation, such as Person Specification. Minor or cosmetic changes can be made to Job Descriptions at this stage in consultation with the HR Manager. However, where there are substantial changes, a revised Job Description must be approved by a Director in consultation with the Head of HR / HR Manager; and may also require a formal job evaluation to be carried out in line with Job Evaluation Procedures. The R&S Panel are tasked with reviewing the Person Specification to ensure that it is fair, objective, and meets the requirements of the post.
- 2.10 The Job Description and Person Specification will inform the Candidate Information Pack and the format of the selection process, as any assessment measures should be recorded on the Person Specification so that candidates know what to expect in the selection process.

- 2.11 Selection methods may include an initial sift, where for, example, only qualifications are sought in a recruitment exercise and if the candidate meets the qualifications level, they will be brought to interview. In other exercises, candidates may have to demonstrate previous experience, abilities or skills on their application form to be considered for the next stage of the selection process.
- 2.12 Candidates will be informed, in the Candidate Information Pack of any competencies that may be assessed at interview or by any other assessment, for example if they are required to deliver a presentation. This will be summary information with fuller information contained in the invitation to interview.
- 2.13 The R&S Panel will agree the timeframe for the recruitment, and this will be communicated in the Candidate Information Pack. HR will be responsible for finalising recruitment closing date, shortlisting, and interview dates to ensure management of diaries is effective. However, it is the responsibility of each R&S Panel member to ensure they set aside sufficient planning time and time to attend shortlisting and interview.
- 2.14 The R&S Panel will also consider the interview questions which they intend to use and how the marking scheme will be used. Some questions which will be used at interview to assess candidates, may focus on areas of importance, and therefore be weighted. The interview questions should be agreed by the R&S Panel in advance of interview.

3. Stage 3: Advertising and getting updates on vacancies being recruited for

- 3.1 PBNI is an equal opportunities employer. Normally vacancies will be advertised externally. All externally advertised vacancies will be advertised on the Careers page of the PBNI website, placed on online job boards and/or in media and/or on PBNI's social media platforms. Vacancies recruited for internally, will be advertised through HR.
- 3.2 Staff may register for notification of vacancies to their own email addresses with an automatic update service.

- 3.3 When an individual searches for a post through this facility, they can save the search and receive updates on any vacancies they are interested in.
- 3.4 It is important that staff on maternity leave, long-term sick absence, career break and secondment know about vacancies. While it is up to individual members of staff to link to the updating service, it would be appropriate for Line Management to ensure that all staff on short term absence are made aware of vacancies. For this to happen, staff must provide permission to HR / Line Management to contact them via personal email addresses.
- 3.5 External competitions will normally operate for at least 10 working days and internal competitions can operate for a minimum of 5 working days.
- 3.6 A Candidate Information Pack will normally be provided for all roles to ensure candidates are aware of the role, how to apply and the terms and conditions of employment.
- 3.7 When applying for a role, candidates will be expected to fully complete an online application process, which may include:
- Application Form
 - Equality Monitoring Form
 - Declaration of Right to Work in UK
 - Declaration of Convictions Form
 - Disability Form (DDA1)
- 3.8 Completed applications must be submitted by the closing date and time. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered.
- 3.9 CVs, letters, additional papers, or supplementary material will not be accepted, and incomplete application forms will not be accepted.

3.10 All information provided by candidates will be managed in line with PBNl's Data Protection Policy and Procedure, respecting confidentiality at all stages and by all persons associated with the R&S process.

4. Stage 4: Shortlisting

4.1 Following the closing date of a recruitment campaign, the shortlisting stage will be completed.

4.2 Shortlisting of applications refers to the formal consideration of anonymised applications to determine if they meet the essential criteria and, if necessary due to high applicant numbers, apply the desirable criteria for the post as described in the person specification.

4.3 The only information which will be considered by the R&S Panel when shortlisting will be the relevant sections of the application form. HR will collate and distribute the relevant information to the R&S Panel members as soon after the closing date as possible and in advance of a formal shortlisting meeting.

4.4 The R&S Panel members must prepare for the R&S Panel meeting by individually assessing each candidate's application, in advance of the formal R&S Panel shortlisting meeting. This means assessing how they have answered each individual shortlisting criteria.

4.5 At the formal shortlisting meeting, the chair will agree with the R&S Panel the candidates who have met all essential criteria and who can be shortlisted and those who do not meet the shortlisting. Details of decisions reached will be documented by the R&S Panel so that feedback is available if required.

4.6 If a candidate does not meet an essential criterion, they cannot be progressed to the next stage of the selection process. Candidates will be advised of the outcome of shortlisting.

Request to review shortlisting decisions

- 4.7 An applicant may request a review of the shortlisting decision if their application was unsuccessful at shortlisting.
- 4.8 A request must be made no more than three days after receipt of the decision. The request must be in writing and must detail the grounds upon which a review is requested.
- 4.9 In such circumstances, HR will request the R&S Panel to review the request, the grounds noted and the candidate's original application.
- 4.10 The R&S Panel can only base their decision on the information the applicant has supplied on the original application form submitted. The R&S Panel will document their decision involving the HR representative if they are not already a R&S Panel member.
- 4.11 The R&S Panel can decide to shortlist the applicant so that they can progress to the next stage of the assessment process, for example, interview; or they can uphold their original decision.
- 4.12 HR will notify the applicant of the decision of the R&S Panel normally within two days of the decision being made, and normally no later than two days before the interview. The decision of the R&S Panel is final.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

- 4.13 PBNI are committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. As part of this commitment we operate a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the role they have applied for.
- 4.14 The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (the DDA) defines a disabled person as 'someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse long-term effect (more than 12 months) on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

4.15 The DDA defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

Physical impairment - this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs) caused through illness, by accident or from birth. Examples are blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

Mental impairment - this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability.

Substantial - put simply, this means that the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

Long-term adverse effect - the effect has to have lasted, or be likely to last, overall for at least twelve months and the effect must be a detrimental one. People who are diagnosed with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled from the point of diagnosis rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

A normal day-to-day activity is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis, such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television. It does not mean something as individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

4.16 To meet the definition, a person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;

- physical coordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or
- perception of risk of physical danger.

4.17 People who satisfy the definition of 'disability' are covered by the DDA. This includes people who have had a disability in the past.

4.18 Applicants will be asked when they make an online application to confirm whether they wish to take part in the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, which is a positive action initiative.

4.19 HR will confirm to the R&S panel the number of applicants who have applied under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, but not disclose the identity of the applicants.

4.20 Candidates who have applied to be considered under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, that are invited to interview will be asked to contact HR to let them know of any adjustments which are requested to allow them to attend the interview.

4.21 The R&S Panel will consider any adjustments which are requested. The name of the candidate will not be provided to the Panel until the reasonable adjustments have been agreed and the candidate has confirmed attendance at interview

4.22 The questions asked at interview will be the same for the person availing of the guaranteed interview scheme as all other candidates. Where a presentation is part of the interview, candidates attending through the guaranteed interview scheme will be expected to undertake this part of the interview

5. Stage 5: Selection Process after shortlisting

General

- 5.1 The selection process will be open, transparent, fair, based upon merit and applied with consistency.
- 5.2 At the start of a recruitment process the R&S Panel will, with advice and guidance provided by HR, as appropriate, agree the selection arrangements. Methods of selection can include for example, competency based, situational or experience based interviews; the use of written assessments relevant to the role; and / or case studies; or presentations.
- 5.3 For any assessment, including an interview, the marking framework and a pass mark must be agreed in advance. The R&S Panel will also agree what to do in the event of equal scores and therefore a tie break situation. For example, it may be appropriate to offer a second interview.

Assessment methods and Interview questions

- 5.4 Assessment methods, including interview questions will be designed to enable candidates to demonstrate, through examples of experience, behaviours, competencies, their suitability for the advertised post.

Arrangements for interviews

- 5.5 Normally the Candidate Information Pack will include expected dates of interviews. Candidates may ask for a change of date for interview, however It is not always possible to change interview dates and times. In exceptional circumstances, the panel may be able to accommodate a candidate's request for a different interview date so long as the process is not unduly delayed.
- 5.6 Candidates who are shortlisted will be provided with the detail of the next stage of the selection process. In most circumstances, this will be an interview, which can comprise of only interview questions, or also include a presentation or a briefing.

5.7 Candidates will receive detail of the day, date, time, expected duration and location of the interview; who the interview panel are; and what areas / competencies will be examined at interview by email.

5.8 If a presentation is required, candidates will normally be provided with detail of the presentation in advance. PBNI panel may also use unseen presentations, the detail of which is provided to the candidate immediately before the interview.

The interview process

5.9 The R&S Panel will be provided with interview materials including the applicant employment history, where appropriate; and interview documents.

5.10 Interviews will normally be in person and held at a PBNI location. Only in exceptional circumstances will there be variation to these arrangements.

5.11 The R&S Panel will meet as a R&S Panel before the interviews start and agree the running order of questions and who will ask questions.

Scoring

5.12 A standardised scoring mechanism must be used by PBNI to score during interviews.

5.13 At the outset of the interview planning process, they must set a pass mark. This can be no less than 60% of the total score available.

5.14 Scores should be based on a 5 point scoring scale:

5 point scoring framework	
Evidence supplied by candidate in response to interview question	Score
Does not adequately answer	1
Poor or incomplete answer	2
Adequate answer	3
Good answer	4
Excellent answer	5

5.15 No half scores can be awarded.

5.16 Weighting can be used to ensure that where there is significant importance given to a particular criteria and the associated question. An example of how weighting works is included in Table 1.

5.17 The R&S Panel members will be expected to mark each candidate individually.

5.18 Table 1: Sample scoring of 5 questions with weighting:

Question no	Candidate's score out of <u>5</u> marks	Weighting	Total Score available	Total Score Awarded
1	4	2x	10	8
2	4	1x	5	4
3	3	1x	5	3
4	4	1x	5	4
Total	15	20		19

5.19 The Chair of the R&S Panel is responsible for ensuring marking is totalled accurately before the end of the interviews, at which time, all documentation, including final scoring sheet, must be returned to HR immediately.

The Interview

5.20 The interview is a two-way process where the candidate can find out about the role, meet the people in line management. It may be the first time they are meeting staff from PBNI, so it is important that the R&S Panel ensure that they are welcoming.

5.21 All applicants in a competition will be asked the same core questions at interview. Supplementary and probing questions may be asked for clarification purposes or to clearly establish relevant facts. Candidates will not be permitted to use any notes they have prepared in responding to questions unless this is agreed as a reasonable adjustment.

5.22 The questions should be open and designed to assess the candidates' suitability for the role, as described in the Job Description and Person Specification.

5.23 The R&S Panel members, using a standard scoring mechanism, will score each candidate individually immediately after each candidate's interview. At the end of all the interviews, the R&S Panel members will total their scores for each candidate and rank them with highest scoring ranked as no 1, next scoring ranked as no 2, etc.

5.24 The Chair or the HR representative will then collate the scores and rankings for all candidates and examine any discrepancies in scoring so that the R&S Panel can discuss these and agree any amendments. If individual members are making amendments to scoring, they must record the reason for the amendment clearly and initial the amendment.

5.25 The R&S Panel will then agree the rank order of candidates with highest scoring / ranking being placed as an appointee, providing they have met the pass mark in the selection process.

6. Stage 6: Post interview

Outcome of interviews / assessments

6.1 All candidates will be notified of the outcome as soon as possible after the last interview and / or assessment.

Reserve lists

6.2 Appointable candidates are those who have reached the pass mark set by the R&S Panel and who will be placed in order of merit. Conditional job offers of employment, conditional upon successful completion of pre-employment checks, will be offered on the basis of this merit list.

6.3 Where there are more appointable candidates than the number of available posts, those applicants who are not offered a position will be offered a place on the reserve list. Candidates will be informed they are on the Reserve List. PBNI reserves the right to place candidates to meet organisational need in specific

circumstances, including appointing outside of merit order (where this is necessary and can be objectively justified).

- 6.4 If a candidate does not accept a conditional offer of employment, it can then be offered to the next appointable candidate(s) in merit order. Candidates who decline an initial offer of employment will remain on the merit/reserve list, in their original position and may be subsequently offered a second posting if available within the 12-month operating period of the reserve/merit list. If the candidate declines the second offer of employment, they will move to the bottom of the reserve/merit list.

Pre employment checks before firm offers

Qualifications / registration checks

- 6.5 All qualifications or registration details must be provided by the date communicated in the Candidate Information Pack. This may be the date of the application or of an expected appointment date. Candidates will have a set time limit to provide the necessary documents to support their application, but if the time limit is not met, there may be circumstances where a conditional offer is withdrawn. The Head of HR or HR Manager will take this decision, in consultation with the Chair of the panel, and communicate the decision to the R&S Panel.

Feedback to Candidates

- 6.6 Requests for feedback equate to a Subject Access Request, interview notes will be made available to the candidate with R&S Panel members names anonymised. HR will liaise with the Chair of the Panel to provide feedback within 10 working days of the request being made. The information supplied can include interview notes and / or written feedback based on a summary of decision making and scoring.

Offers of Employment – The Process

Conditional offer of employment

6.7 Candidates who have been appointed to a permanent or fixed term post; or appointed to a reserve list will be offered a position conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

Declaration of Convictions Check

6.8 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Order does not apply to certain posts. Therefore, all PBNI applicants are required to complete a Declaration of Convictions form. Answering 'YES' to any of the questions on the Convictions Declaration does not necessarily bar a candidate from appointment. Each case will be considered on its merits.

6.9 The information disclosed in the Declaration of Convictions form will not be shared with the R&S Panel.

6.10 Where an individual declares previous convictions, these will be reviewed by a vetting R&S Panel after a job offer has been made and accepted. This R&S Panel will comprise the HR Manager or nominee and the Chair of the Recruitment R&S Panel. The Vetting R&S Panel will make a recommendation to a Director / Chief Executive for approval.

6.11 The information provided to the Vetting R&S Panel will have the names removed and they will be identified only by a unique candidate identifier.

6.12 Checks will also be carried out in relation to declared previous convictions to assess suitability for appointment and to ensure that candidates do not go through a process unnecessarily.

6.13 If a candidate does not declare previous convictions and it is discovered at a later stage the case will be referred to the vetting R&S Panel for a decision on applicant suitability for appointment; or if they are in employment, they must be

processed through the disciplinary process where the matter should be considered as gross misconduct.

6.14 Subject to the requirement of the post, applicants may be required to undergo a criminal record check at Access NI Basic, Standard, or Enhanced with check against the vetting and barred lists. Counter Terrorist Checks (CTC) will be carried out for those staff who may work in prisons.

Qualifications and other checks

6.15 All candidates will be required to produce the relevant documentation required for the post; photocopies will not normally be accepted. If the information is not supplied, it will result in the candidate being rejected from the competition. HR usually allows 10 working days for this information to be supplied by the candidate and if there are delays this could result in the job offer being withdrawn.

Firm offer of employment

6.16 Once the applicable pre-employment checks have been completed and are satisfactory, then a firm offer of employment may be progressed and a start date agreed.

6.17 An offer of employment will expire after the period noted in the firm offer. If an acceptance is not received, it will be withdrawn, and the next reserve will be offered the post in question.

6.18 Appointees who have indicated on their application form that they may require consideration of reasonable adjustments if taking up the role, will be contacted by a HR / People Partner to arrange a meeting to discuss potential adjustments.

Acceptance of Offer of Employment

6.19 Once an offer of employment is accepted, our Learning and Organisational Development Team will contact the new employee to provide them with onboarding reading and induction training.

6.20 The appropriate staff / line management will be advised of firm starting dates, so that preparations can be made to welcome our new start to their role.

7. Review

7.1 This procedure will be reviewed after four years following its approval by the Board. Interim reviews may also be prompted by feedback, identified changes in practice or legislation.

END

Appendix1: Guidance on Shortlisting and Interview R&S Panel Composition

This provides guidance on the make up of panels for a sample of posts and may be varied to suit the circumstances of the recruitment exercise. Panels will normally consist of three people.

Post	Chair of shortlisting / Interview R&S Panel	Shortlisting and interview R&S Panel members	
Chief Executive	Board Chair	Board Members Representatives from Sponsor Branch Any other relevant personnel	Independent R&S Panel member / DoJ representative
Directors / Heads of Service	Chief Executive	Board Member	Independent R&S Panel member / DoJ representative
Assistant Directors	Chief Executive	Director	Director(s)
Area Managers	Director	Director / Head of Service	HR
Probation Officers	Area Manager	Another Area Manager, Member of Corporate Team	HR
Probation Service Officer	Area Manager	Another Area Manager, Member of Corporate Team	HR
Business Support Staff	Line Manager	Area Manager, Member of Corporate Team	HR
Administration Staff	Line Manager	Member of Probation staff, or Corporate Team	HR