

Interview Guidance for Applicants

Interviews may include **experience-based and/or scenario-based questions**.

The format of the interview will be confirmed in your invitation letter so that you know what to expect in advance.

To help you feel prepared, we recommend that you review the **Job Description, Person Specification, and PBNI Values** before your interview. These outline the experience and qualities relevant to the role.

PBNI identifies essential criteria within the Person Specification, and these may be explored during the interview through discussion of your experience.

Experience-Based Questions

For experience-based questions, you will be invited to **share examples from your own experience** that relate to the role.

You are encouraged to:

- Draw on examples that feel **relevant and comfortable for you to discuss**
- Describe your own contribution in the situation
- Take a moment to think before responding, if needed
- Ask for the question to be repeated if required

Scenario-Based and Specialist Questions

In some cases, the interview may also include **scenario-based or specialist questions**.

- **Scenario-based questions** involve being presented with a situation and asked how you might respond. There is no single “correct” answer—this is an opportunity for you to talk through your thinking and approach. You can respond even if you have not encountered the exact situation before.
- For roles with a **specialist element** (for example, financial or technical posts), you may be asked questions that allow you to share your knowledge and experience in that area.

Interview Format

Your invitation letter will clearly outline the format of the interview, including whether experience-based, scenario-based, or specialist questions will be included. Any alternative selection methods will also be communicated in advance.

Structuring Your Responses

Some applicants find it helpful to use a simple structure when answering questions. One example is:

- **Context** – Briefly describe the situation
- **Challenge** – What were you aiming to achieve?
- **Action** – What did you do? (your contribution)
- **Result** – What happened, and what did you learn?

This is offered as a guide only - you can respond in a way that feels natural to you.

Preparing for Your Interview

It can be helpful to reflect in advance on a range of experiences that demonstrate your skills and approach. These might come from:

- Work experience
- Education
- Voluntary or personal experiences

You will be given the opportunity to talk through your examples during the interview, and the panel may ask follow-up questions to better understand your experience.

We understand that interviews can feel challenging, and it is completely natural to feel nervous. Our aim is to provide a fair and supportive environment where you can share your experience.

Support and Adjustments

We aim to make this process as **supportive and accessible as possible**.

If there is anything that would help you feel more comfortable or able to participate fully—whether related to a disability, health need, or personal circumstance—please let us know in advance by contacting: recruitment@probation-ni.gov.uk

We will be happy to work with you to provide appropriate support.