

# Recruitment Procedure

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## Document Control Sheet

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This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape, an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

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# CONTENTS

<b>Number</b>	<b>Recruitment Procedure</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
1	Pre-Recruitment	1
2	Selection Panel	1
3	Training of Panel Members	2
4	Advertisement	2
5	Selection Process – Administration	2-3
6	Screening of Application Forms	3
7	Declaration of Convictions Check	4
8	Shortlisting	4
9	Interview	5
10	Time Management	6
11	Post Selection Process	6
12	Feedback to Candidates	6
13	Appointment Process	6-7
14	Offer of Employment	7
15	Appeals Procedure	7-8

# PBNI Recruitment Procedure

## 1. Pre-Recruitment

- 1.1 Following approval for the post to be advertised, Human Resources will identify the internal customer for the request for a recruitment competition. This is essential, as a point of contact is required to ensure that needs are established and met.
- 1.2 An identified lead person from HR will liaise with the customer to confirm the use of the existing job description, person specification and role profile. If applicable it may be necessary to draw up or revise a job description, person specification and role profile with the customer. HR will provide advice and guidance regarding the format to be used. At this stage the following will be agreed:
  - The essential and/or desirable criteria for the post
  - Hours of work
  - Location
- 1.3 The timelines for the recruitment process for the specific post will be agreed and set from the outset, including panel membership, training as well as shortlisting and interview dates.
- 1.4 The method of selection will be agreed e.g. interview, presentations, etc. The method of selection should be determined by factors including how quickly the staff are required in post and to what extent testing of knowledge, skills and experience is required beyond the detail provided on an application form.

## 2. Selection Panel

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to take all reasonable steps to ensure, *as far as reasonably possible*, that each panel is balanced in terms of gender and community background.

The selection panel identified should include at least one member with detailed knowledge of the work area for the post to be filled. Dependent on the role being advertised PBNI may also use the expertise of PBNI Board Members, and/or expertise of external bodies/personnel.

- Panel members shall be at least one grade above the position being advertised.
- The Chair of the panel shall be at least two grades above.
- A member of the Board will be involved in the selection procedure for appointments to Senior Management.
- Staff who are temporarily promoted will not normally be asked to sit on a panel that is selecting a role that is equivalent to their permanent grade.

Human Resources will contact the prospective panel member's line manager in the first instance seeking line approval to release to undertake the duties associated with the recruitment process.

- 2.2 It is important that where panel members are likely to have professional knowledge of potential applicants, that care is taken to ensure that this knowledge does not influence the selection process. Personal knowledge of a candidate by a panel member will not preclude the person from participating as a panel member. However, if the prospective panel member has a close personal relationship with potential candidate/s, he/she should consider if he/she can fulfill their panel role in an objective and impartial way and consideration should be given to identifying an alternative panel member. If a panel member is aware of a potential conflict of interest then this must be declared from the outset and recorded on the appropriate declaration form provided by Human Resources. Should a panel member feel at any stage that there is a conflict of interest then this must be noted on the form.

The expectation is that panel members will fulfil their responsibilities objectively, with impartiality and in a consistent manner. At the end of the interview process HR will quality assure the panel paperwork and ensure this is demonstrably fair and consistent in line with standard marking system.

### **3. Training of Panel Members**

- 3.1 Training for panel members is compulsory. Human Resources will be responsible for arranging recruitment and selection training and equal opportunities training for panel members.
- 3.2 Panel members will also receive PBNI's Panel Members Guidance, PBNI's Equality and Diversity Board Brief for Panel Members, a Confidentiality Declaration and Conflict of Interest Pro-forma (all of which should be signed).
- 3.3 Training records will be maintained for all panel members.

### **4. Advertisement**

- 4.1 The Probation Board for Northern Ireland is an equal opportunities employer and vacancies being filled by external competition will normally be publically advertised. All vacancies will be listed on the recruitment page of the PBNI website [www.pbni.org.uk](http://www.pbni.org.uk).

### **5. Selection Process – Administration**

- 5.1 Application packs and Applicant Information Booklets will be available to download from the PBNI recruitment website [www.pbni.org.uk](http://www.pbni.org.uk), or by emailing [recruitment@pbni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@pbni.gsi.gov.uk) or writing to PBNI Human Resources Department.

The application pack will include an:

1. Application form containing the essential and desirable criteria

2. Equality Monitoring Form
3. Declaration of Convictions Form – if appropriate
4. Disability Discrimination Form (DDA1)

**Forms 2 to 4 above should be returned to the Human Resources Department along with the application form.**

- 5.2 The recruitment objective is to attract as many valid applications as possible however applications **will not be considered** in the following circumstances.
- Applications will not be accepted if **not completed** on the agreed PBNI application form.
  - The same amount of space will be available on the application form for all candidates to demonstrate each criterion – reformatted application forms will not be accepted.
  - CVs or additional sheets will not be accepted.
  - Applications will not be accepted if the Declaration of Convictions Form is not completed and returned (if required for the post)
  - Applications received with a shortfall in postage will not be accepted.
  - Applications not received by the date and time on the advertisement will not be accepted.
- 5.3 Applications will be accepted by post, or hand delivery to the Human Resources Department, PBNI Headquarters, 80-90 North Street, Belfast BT1 1LD  
or  
Applications will be accepted by email to [recruitment@pbni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@pbni.gsi.gov.uk)
- 5.4 The responsibility for ensuring applications are received on time lies with the applicant and the closing time and date will be strictly applied to all applicants. It is important that all applications for any competition are treated consistently.
- 5.5 When returning an application using email it will be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is received before the closing time. Technical problems associated with digital transmission of data can mean that email delivery is not instantaneous. It is recommended that emails are sent allowing sufficient time for any potential problems. Candidates should ensure that they keep evidence that they have sent their emailed applications within the required timeframe.

## **6. Screening of application forms**

- 6.1 After the closing deadline has passed formal screening will be carried out the by the Human Resources Department and this consists of a check to determine that the:
- Application form has been fully completed
  - Equal opportunities form has been returned
  - Declaration of convictions form has been returned (if required for the post)
  - Disability discrimination form (DDA1) has been returned

- 6.2 Part-completed applications will not be accepted and will be omitted from the competition.
- 6.3 Applications which do not pass the above formal screening will not be progressed further and the relevant applicants will be informed that their application is invalid.

## **7. Declaration of Convictions Check**

- 7.1 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Order does not apply to certain posts within the PBNI. Therefore all candidates required to complete a Declaration of Convictions form should include spent convictions. Answering 'YES' to any questions on the Convictions Declaration does not necessarily bar a candidate from appointment. Each case will be considered on its merits.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Where an individual declares previous convictions these will be reviewed by PBNI's vetting panel. This panel is independent of those involved in the selection process itself.
- 7.4 The information provided to this panel on candidate(s) will have the names removed and identified only by a unique candidate identifier. If a candidate does not declare previous convictions and it is discovered at a later stage in the process the case will be referred to the vetting panel for a decision on applicant suitability.
- 7.5 When completion of a convictions declaration is not part of the recruitment process, any unspent convictions determined via the vetting checks of suitable candidates will be considered by the vetting panel.

## **8. Shortlisting**

- 8.1 Before commencing a recruitment process, panel members will have decided with HR what the shortlisting criteria will be for the competition. Shortlisting of applications refers to the formal consideration of anonymised applications to determine if they meet the essential criteria and, if necessary, the desirable criteria for the post as described in the person specification.
- 8.2 Only the information contained in the application form should influence the decision of the panel and all decisions must be fair, applied with consistency and all candidates will be assessed objectively.
- 8.3 The application form will inform candidates that **all** sections of the form **must** be completed. Application forms will be designed so that applicants can fully demonstrate

how they meet each criterion. If an applicant does not meet all essential criteria the application will be rejected.

## **9. Interview**

- 9.1 The selection panel will meet with HR to agree the pass mark, the marking framework, and the questions. In the event of equal scores and therefore a tie break situation, the panel will pre-agree tie break questions to differentiate between candidates. These will be used to rank order tied candidates.
- 9.2 All applicants in the same competition will be asked the same core questions at interview. Supplementary and prompt questions may be asked for clarification purposes or in order to clearly establish relevant facts. Candidates will not be permitted to use any notes they have prepared in responding to panel member's questions.
- 9.3 Invite to Interview letters issued to candidates will advise of the selection process. If competency based interviews agreed, the candidate will be advised of the competency areas to be assessed and it is in the candidate's own interests that the questions remain confidential throughout the process.
- 9.4 Interview questions will be designed to enable candidates to demonstrate, through examples of behaviours, the competences required for the post. Situational/scenario based questions and/or questions related to a specific specialism or knowledge may also be used.
- 9.5 Panel Chairpersons must be able to provide HR with a completed scoring summary sheet for all interviewees which support the decisions of the panel. It will be the role of Human Resources to provide guidance aimed at providing a consistent approach in the management of competitions.

## **10. Time Management**

- 10.1 An interview schedule will be drawn up by Human Resources for each recruitment competition. Each candidate will receive the same maximum amount of time for interview. It will be the Chair's responsibility to ensure that each candidate is interviewed in accordance with the interview schedule. Should a candidate arrive late for his/her interview, it is unlikely that another interview slot will be guaranteed. The panel will have to decide on the course of action to take, depending upon the circumstances.
- 10.2 Only in exceptional circumstances e.g. major unforeseen traffic disruption will a panel re-convene to interview a candidate who has been unable to attend for the scheduled interview. Any candidate who is unable to attend on their given interview date should contact PBNi Human Resources as soon as possible as it may be possible to re-schedule the interview time or date.

## **11. Post-Selection Process**

- 11.1 All candidates will be notified of the outcome normally within 10 working days of all interviews closing.
- 11.2 Successful candidates will be placed in order of merit and postings will be offered on this basis. Where there are more successful candidates than the number of available posts they will be placed on a reserve list.
- 11.3 If a candidate turns an offer of employment down, it can then be offered to the other appointable candidates 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 list. PBNi reserves the right, however, to place candidates in order to meet organisational need in specific circumstances.
- 11.4 Candidates will be provided with details on vetting arrangements when notified of their suitability at interview/assessment. All appropriate documents must be returned within 10 days of issue or the offer may be withdrawn.

## **12. Feedback to candidates**

- 12.1 Candidates will be informed of the opportunity to apply for feedback. Requests must be in writing (email requests to [recruitment@pbni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@pbni.gsi.gov.uk) are acceptable).
- 12.2 Requested feedback will be provided in writing by the Human Resources Department in a standardised letter format.

## **13. Appointment Process**

- 13.1 References will be sought for all successful/suitable candidates once he/she has confirmed their intention to take up the conditional offer. This requirement is highlighted in the recruitment documentation, success at interview and reserve candidate letters.
- 13.2 All candidates will be required to produce the original relevant qualifications, photocopies will not be accepted; if this information is not supplied it will result in the candidate being rejected from the competition. HR allows two weeks for this information to be supplied by the candidate.
- 13.3 Candidates with declared disabilities who have been successful in the selection process will be contacted by Human Resources where appropriate to establish whether the individual requires any reasonable adjustments to the workplace prior to appointment.

- 13.4 All positions with PBNI require that candidates are vetted to the required standard. No confirmed job offer will be made to candidates until these pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed.
- 13.5 Applicants with a criminal conviction should not refrain from applying for a post within the PBNI. Due consideration will be given to each individual case in relation to the specific post applied for.
- 13.6 Subject to the requirement of the post applicants may be required to undergo a criminal record check at Access NI Basic, Standard, Enhanced or Enhanced with check against the vetting and barred lists). Counter Terrorist Checks (CTC) will be carried out for those staff working in prisons.

#### **14. Offer of Employment**

- 14.1 The offer of appointment will include the terms & conditions of appointment. An offer of employment letter will include the following: (as applicable)
- a) The name of the post being offered;
  - b) Whether it is full-time, part-time, fixed term, etc;
  - c) The location of the position;
  - d) Line Manager
  - e) Reporting instructions and starting salary;
  - f) Annual leave allowance;
  - g) Probationary period;
  - h) Mobility paragraph (if required);
  - i) Instructions to new entrants to bring P45;
  - j) Information on pension provision
  - k) Any allowances payable
  - l) Any necessary forms required for processing the appointment, and instructions for their completion and return
- 14.2 It is particularly important that the terms and conditions outlined in an offer of appointment are carefully quality assured because, once the candidate accepts the offer this becomes the legal contract with that candidate

#### **15. Appeals Procedure**

- 15.1 A candidate can use the appeals procedure if he/she can provide grounds that:
- the process used by the PBNI is flawed
  - or
  - he/she has been treated less favourably than another candidate in the same process.

The appeal must be received by the PBNI within 10 working days of the alleged incident taking place. (Explanatory note: This is taken to be 10 days from the date of the letter or email notifying you of the outcome of your application.)

15.2 The stages in the appeals process are:

- a) The candidate must write to the Head of Human Resources, PBNI, 80-90 North Street, Belfast BT1 1LD, outlining the reasons and providing evidence why he/she believes there are grounds for appeal.
- b) A written receipt of acknowledgement will be issued within 5 working days.
- c) The Head of Human Resources will convene an appropriate panel (not previously involved in the recruitment) to consider if there are grounds for appeal.
- d) Prior to considering an appeal, the Head of Human Resources will provide the panel with all relevant information.
- e) It may be necessary in some instances to seek clarification from the original panel members and/or Human Resources.

15.3 The appeals panel can decide to uphold an appeal (in full or in part) or not to uphold the appeal. The outcome of the appeal will normally be conveyed to the appellant within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal.

15.4 If the panel does not uphold the appeal, then the candidate will be informed of his/her further right to appeal to a Deputy Director of Probation (or above if applicable).

- a) The further appeal to the Deputy Director must be received within 10 working days of the original appeal decision. (Explanatory Note: This is taken to be 10 days from the date of the letter notifying you of the outcome of the appeal. The further appeal must be in writing to the address as stated in 5.2 a).
- b) The Deputy Director will consider the evidence/reasons provided to him/her on the grounds outlined.
- c) The outcome of the further appeal will normally be conveyed to the appellant within 20 working days of receipt.
- d) The Deputy Director can decide to uphold an appeal (in full or in part) or not to uphold the appeal.
- e) If the appeal is successful, the appellant will be informed of any appropriate action to be taken.
- f) The decision of the Deputy Director is final and will conclude the appeals process.