

Staff Transfer and Mobility Policy and Procedures

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Alternative Formats

This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in 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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Transfer & Mobility Policy

1. The Rationale for the Policy.

This is an operational policy implemented by the Human Resources Department. It is important to note that the movement of employees between locations and/or types of work is an essential component in arrangements to ensure an appropriate and equitable allocation of human resources, skills and experience to meet PBNI's responsibilities and to ensure that operational and business needs are met.

The primary driver for this policy is PBNI's duty of care towards its employees and particular roles have been identified where a move will be considered after 3-6 years in that post. This will however result in replacement moves into those identified roles. **It is therefore essential probation grades are aware that placement in their current location/role is finite (ie time limited) and they may be required to work at any location in Northern Ireland (including prisons) throughout the course of their career.**

Additionally the knowledge, skills and commitment of our staff is fundamental to all that we do. For probation grades, experience in a range of practice locations/functions is a critical foundation for professional development.

2. The Overarching Aim.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that employee requested transfers and mobility moves are dealt with in a fair, equitable and transparent manner so that as an organisation PBNI has the right people, in terms of qualification, competence, ability and potential, in the right place at the right time to meet organisational business need.

While, as a public body the primary responsibility must be to ensure the provision of services across the community, staffing decisions will be made taking into account the circumstances of individual employees.

3. Objective.

To provide an effective system for the appropriate and equitable deployment of PBNI employees in order to meet business need.

4. Responsibilities.

Human Resources will be responsible for bringing cases for consideration under the Transfer and Mobility Policy and Procedure to the Workforce Planning Group (WPG). Assistant Directors and Area Managers will be responsible for initially communicating WPG decisions in a timely manner as per the Mobility and Transfer Procedures.

5. Definition of Transfer

Please note that a change of location/role/team is denoted as a 'transfer' irrespective of whether this has been made via the Mobility or Transfer Procedures.

6. Complaints

Disputes or complaints arising from the operation or application of this policy should be addressed through the PBNI Grievance Policy and Procedure.

7. Review.

This policy will be reviewed four years from approval.

Interim reviews may be prompted by feedback, and/or identified changes in practice.

8 Mobility Procedures.

- 8.1 Prior to making decisions on mobility PBNI will consider the circumstances of employees and the relevant employment legislation.

Although circumstances can arise (for both service and personal reasons) it is desirable that probation grade (ie probation officers, probation community officers, probation service officers, area managers) transfers should normally take place on the basis of a predictable and planned cycle supported by appropriate training and preparation prior to each move.

- a) Probation grades working in prisons, intensive supervision (case management), PPT and ISU programmes roles will be considered for a change of location and/or type of work on average every 3-6 years. (For community service supervisors see paragraph q and for administrative staff see paragraph r).
- b) This will result in a chain of moves for staff in other teams that will also be handled in line with this procedure. **It should be the expectation of probation grade staff that mobility transfers will take place throughout their career.** This does not necessarily mean that employees will definitely transfer within the 3-6 year timescale. If an employee indicates that they wish to remain in a prison/ISU case management/PPT/ISU programmes role an Occupational Health assessment will be carried out before a decision is made on whether he/she will be permitted to remain in that location beyond the 6 year point.
- c) As indicated the primary focus (under duty of care) is to move employees from prison and intensive supervision case management/programmes/PPT roles however employees can transfer consecutively from a prison to an ISU post and vice versa as this is a break from different working environments. When this occurs the next transfer will however be to a generic role/other specialism.
- d) Where an employee is seeking to return to a prison or intensive supervision case management/programmes/PPT post this will not be permitted until there has been at least one year's break from those environments in a generic/other specialist team and if it is operationally feasible. (E.g. 1st post Prison-6years, 2nd post moved to ISU case management-6 years, 3rd post moved to generic team - must be at least one year in generic team before return to Prison/Intensive supervision role if operationally feasible).

- e) When taking into account the circumstances of employees, those who are prevented from transferring to a prison or ISU case management/ programmes/ PPT role either because of a current workplace adjustment/health/disability or personal/welfare circumstances, will have the situation reviewed again after a further 3 year period.
- f) Staff seeking a transfer should make a transfer request as per the Transfer Procedures below (see also appendix 1 transfer request form). This will result in the request being added to a transfer list maintained by Human Resources.
- g) The Workforce Planning Group (WPG) consists of members drawn from the Management Executive Team who meet monthly to consider resource planning. HR will create an employee mobility list and this mobility list will be considered by the WPG when transfers need to be considered and/or when permanent vacancies need to be filled. The WPG will also consider the transfer request list (as per paragraph f above). Additionally if any other factors are known about an employee (as indicated in paragraph 8.1) these will be taken into account.
- h) Mobility transfers will normally be considered on the basis of longest serving in the current role or the number of hours required of the post. In considering the transfer list attention will be given to the skills mix and experience of the employee's current team before a decision is made on a requested transfer, as organisational need will take priority.
- i) WPG will endeavour to consider mobility transfers at least 3 months before they are planned to occur in order to provide sufficient notification to employees. Where however a vacancy needs to be filled a shorter notification timescale may be unavoidable.
- j) When the Workforce Planning Group authorises mobility transfers the decisions will be provided to the Assistant Directors.
- k) Assistant Directors should advise line managers of the planned transfers as soon as possible when outcomes from the WPG are known. In the case of Area Manager proposed transfers the Assistant Director (as direct line manager) should follow the process below.
- l) Line managers should subsequently advise the employee of the proposed transfer and confirm this discussion has taken place with the relevant HR Business Partner.
- m) If any personal/welfare, health or disability related issues are raised with the line manager they should immediately advise the HR Business Partner who will take the matter forward as appropriate and WPG will be advised to ascertain if the transfer needs to be reconsidered.
- n) Human Resources will write to the employee to formally advise him/her of the proposed transfer (indicating that date of transfer to be agreed). If the employee then wishes to raise any concerns about the transfer at this point, this should be in writing to the HR Business Partner within 5 working days of receipt of the transfer letter.
- o) If not already agreed at WPG, the Assistant Directors and Line Managers should liaise to agree suitable transfer dates and should then advise Human Resources accordingly.

- p) A further transfer letter confirming the transfer date and providing information on excess mileage will be issued from the Human Resources Department. HR will endeavour to issue approximately one month prior to the transfer date. The line manager should agree training and preparation plans as soon as practical.
- q) Community Service Supervisors will not normally be subject to the 3 to 6 year cycle however they may be employed in any post appropriate to their grade at such place of employment in PBNI's service as may be required. Community Service Supervisors may therefore be transferred under the Mobility Procedure if necessary.
- r) Administrative grades may be assigned to a field team, prison setting or headquarters to work in support of service delivery. Administrative grades will not be subject to the 3-6 year cycle but may be employed in any post appropriate to their grade at such place of employment in PBNI's service as may be required. They are expected to travel a reasonable travelling distance from home (up to 35 miles) and may be transferred as required. This may include, for example, business reasons relating to restructuring or reorganisation of teams or relocation of offices. The WPG will consider when this is necessary and the Mobility Procedure will be followed as appropriate.
- s) Internal trawl notices will normally be issued where new roles arise within the organisation or if it has not been possible to identify a replacement member of staff under the mobility arrangements or transfer list.
- t) Appraisals will not be taken into account by WPG for mobility transfers or transfer requests. Employees interested in transferring should make this request explicit by completing a transfer request form
- u) Staff should note that Area Managers can decide to transfer staff 'internally' within individual team boundaries for operational reasons if required. This will be a decision made by the Area Manager in discussion with the Assistant Director and will not require WPG authorisation. In such circumstances however the line manager will firstly inform the employee, advising him/her of the reasons for doing so. The Assistant Director will advise Human Resources of this internal transfer confirming date of transfer. Human Resources will then issue a transfer letter affirming the transfer date and providing information on excess mileage. However when WPG are considering mobility moves the internal transfer will have no impact on the 3-6 year cycle as the employee will be regarded as being in the same team irrespective of office location.

8.2 Transfers outside the normal mobility arrangements.

- a) In certain circumstances to meet its obligations as a public service employer, PBNI may have to direct an employee to a particular function/location in cases where they have less than 3 years in their current role. This will not however apply to employees who have previously been located in a prison and intensive supervision case management/programmes role with a break of less than one year. Some examples of the reasons for staff moves are:-

- I. An increased workload in a particular location
- II. Sickness leading to the need for temporary cover
- III. The need to rebalance skills, experience and number of staff in posts across Northern Ireland
- IV. The need to fill vacant posts which could not be filled via the normal Mobility or Transfer arrangements or where a trawl notice has been unsuccessful in filling the post.

b) Where such a situation arises, Human Resources will be involved to facilitate consultation with the employee and his/her representative (a trade union representative or colleague as nominated by the individual). In the course of such consultation PBNI shall provide in writing:-

- I. The circumstances which make the move necessary (subject to respect for confidential information in regard to other employees).
- II. The alternative options which have been considered/explored to fill the post.
- III. The reasons why the individual employee concerned has been identified as the person to fill the post.

9. Transfer Procedures

9.1 The employee interested in moving from their current role must complete an Employee Transfer Request Form (Annex 1). This form should be signed by their line manager and submitted to the Human Resources Department. A transfer list will be maintained by the Human Resources Department and the request will be added to the transfer list in date order. .

- a) Employees requesting a transfer must state the PBNI office location, specialism or general geographical area that they wish to transfer to.
- b) The Human Resources Department will acknowledge receipt of the transfer request within 5 working days.
- c) When a vacancy arises, the transfer list will be reviewed and the employee at the top of the register for the geographical location, specialism at which the vacancy exists will be considered by the Workforce Planning Group.
- d) As part of the WPG decision making process the skill mix and experience in each team will need to be taken into consideration as well as the hours required of the vacant post, as organisational need will take priority. Employees should recognise therefore that for business needs, it will not always be possible to release staff for a transfer. In such circumstances, while they may be the first on the list for a particular location, it is not an absolute guarantee that he/she will be the next person to transfer to their desired location/area of work. The final decision will be authorised by the Workforce Planning Group.

- e) Employees who are on the transfer list who subsequently learn of a colleagues transfer to their preferred location/area of work should understand that the above circumstances in paragraph 9.1 d will have been taken into consideration or the colleague may have been above him/her on the transfer list.
- f) When the Workforce Planning Group authorises requested transfers the decisions will be provided to the Assistant Directors.
- g) Assistant Directors should advise line managers that a transfer request has been accepted by WPG as soon as possible when WPG outcomes are known. In the case of Area Managers the Assistant Director (as direct line manager) should follow the process below.
- h) Line managers should subsequently advise the employee that his/her requested transfer has been accepted by WPG and confirm this discussion has taken place with the relevant HR Business Partner.
- i) Human Resources will then write to the employee to confirm the offer of a transfer.
- j) Acceptance of an internal transfer offer must be confirmed by the employee in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the offer.
- k) Upon acceptance of a transfer offer, HR will obtain confirmation of the proposed transfer date from the Assistant Director. HR will send written notification to the employee confirming the date on which the transfer will take place and will provide information on excess mileage allowance.
- l) Where an employee declines an internal transfer offer, the request will be removed from the internal transfer list. Where an employee declines an internal transfer offer but wishes to stay on the transfer list they must make a further request. In exceptional circumstances, mitigation for non-acceptance will be considered to keep a person who has refused a transfer on the transfer list; however the current vacancy will be offered to the next person on the list. Such mitigation must be provided in writing to Human Resources within 5 working days.

9.2 Structures/mechanisms.

The Workforce Planning Group (WPG) will be the forum that will consider and authorise employee requested transfers.

- a) The management of internal transfers will be operated through the use of a transfer list. The list will be updated and maintained by the HR Department. All transfers will be prioritised based on the length of time on the internal transfer list.
- b) Internal transfers will be considered prior to normal recruitment activities, with the exception of new posts. Exceptional circumstances such as redeployment, disciplinary sanction or conflict resolution may take precedence over this policy.
- c) The responsibilities placed on PBNI by employment legislation will be observed at all times and on occasions will take precedence over this policy.

- d) Employees subject to live disciplinary warnings, or performance improvement plans are not eligible to apply for a transfer.
- e) Employees cannot request a transfer within the first year of employment or within twelve months of moving posts as a result of a requested transfer. Additionally where an employee has requested a transfer into a prison or intensive supervision case management/programmes/PPT post, they will not be permitted to return to such a role until at least one year's break from those environments in a generic/other specialist role.

Appendix 1 Transfer Request

Full Name:

Current Location:

Contact Number :

Location/Specialism requested:

Please give brief details of reasons for requesting a transfer:

I have read and understood the Probation Board for Northern Ireland Transfer & Mobility Policy and Procedure and wish to request an internal transfer as outlined above

Signature:

Date:

Line Manager Comments

Signature :

Date:

**This form should be returned to the Human Resources Department
hr@pbni.gsi.gov.uk**