

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

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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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PBNI Recruitment and Selection Procedure

1 Pre-Recruitment

- 1.1 The decision to commence a recruitment exercise will be taken by PBNI senior management. In taking this decision, senior management will take into account all relevant factors at that time (e.g. organisational and business needs, diversity issues or specific skills required), before deciding whether to recruit internally or externally. A requisition form will be completed. Inclusion Welcoming Statement based on available information will also be considered.
- 1.2 Following approval from senior management for the post to be advertised Human Resources will identify the lead internal customer for a recruitment competition. This is essential, as a point of contact is required to ensure that needs are established and met.
- 1.3 An identified lead person from HR will liaise with the lead internal customer to review the existing job description, person specification and role profile. If applicable it may be necessary to draw up or revise a job description and person specification with the customer. HR will provide advice and guidance regarding the format to be used. At this stage the following will be agreed:
 - The Job Description
 - The essential and/or desirable criteria for the post
 - Hours of work
 - Location(s)
- 1.4 The timelines for the recruitment process for the specific post will be agreed and set from the outset, including panel membership, training, shortlisting and interview dates.
- 1.5 The method of selection will be agreed e.g. interview, presentations, etc. The method of selection should be determined by factors including to what extent testing of knowledge, skills and experience is required beyond the detail provided on an application form.

2. Selection Panel

- 2.1 Human Resources will take all reasonable steps to ensure, *as far as reasonably possible*, that each panel is balanced in terms of gender and community background. All selection panel members will have been trained in Recruitment and Selection. (In accordance with Section 5 of the Recruitment and Selection Policy)

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.

- The Chair and Panel members shall be at least one grade above the position being advertised.
- A member of the Board may be on the panel in the selection procedure for appointments to Senior Management, if appropriate.

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, however, in particular circumstance's this may be required.

2.2 Panel members will fulfil their responsibilities objectively, with impartiality and in a consistent manner.

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 consider at any stage that there is a conflict of interest then this will be considered by the Head of HR and the panel member may be asked to remove themselves from the process and mitigating actions may be put in place.

At the end of the selection 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 (the last two of which should be signed).
- 3.3 Training records will be maintained for all panel members.

4. Advertisement

- 4.1 PBNI is an equal opportunities employer and vacancies being filled by external competition will be publically advertised. All vacancies will be listed on the recruitment page of the PBNI website www.pbni.org.uk .

4.2 For vacancies being filled by internal competition Human Resources, in association with line management, will ensure that the trawl notice is issued to staff on maternity leave, long-term sick absence, career break and secondment. It is Line Management responsibility to ensure that all staff on short term absence are made aware of vacancies.

5. Selection Process

External Advertisements

5.1 Application packs and Information for Applicants booklets will be available to download from the PBNi recruitment website www.pbni.org.uk, or by emailing recruitment@probation-ni.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
4. Disability Discrimination Form (DDA1)

Forms 2, 3 and 4 above must be returned to the Human Resources Department along with the application form.

5.2 The recruitment objective is to attract as many 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.
- Reformatted applications will not be accepted. Typescript must remain unchanged with font size 12 or legible handwritten block capitals using black ink.
- CVs, letters, additional sheets or supplementary material will not be accepted or additional sheets will not be accepted.
- Applications will not be accepted if the Declaration of Convictions Form is not completed and returned
- Applications will not be accepted if the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form has not been returned
- Applications will not be accepted if the Disability discrimination form (DDA1) has not been completed and returned
- Applications received with a shortfall in postage will not be accepted.
- Applications not received by the stated closing date and time on the advertisement will not be accepted.
- Part completed application forms will not be accepted.

5.3 Applicants will be provided with the full details of the post including:

- Hours of work
- Location
- Grade of post
- Salary
- Job Description
- Essential and desirable criteria
- The application process
- The selection process
- The duration (if not permanent)
- Closing date for receipt of completed application forms

5.4 Applications will be accepted by post, email or hand delivery. Applications will be accepted by online submission once PBNI have an online recruitment system.

5.5 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.

5.6 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 and date. 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 by Human Resources and this consists of a check to determine that the:

- Application has been received by the closing date and time
- There is no shortfall in postage from applicant
- Applications are completed on the agreed PBNI application form (CVs, letters, additional sheets or supplementary material will not be accepted)
- Applications have not been reformatted. (Typescript must remain unchanged with font size 12 or legible handwritten block capitals using black ink).
- Applications are not part-completed
- Equal Opportunities Form has been returned
- Declaration of Convictions Form has been completed and returned
- Disability Discrimination Form (DDA1) has been completed and returned

6.2 Part-completed applications will not be accepted and will not progress to the shortlisting stage of 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 (i.e. those concerned with the administration of justice). Therefore all candidates are required to complete a Declaration of Convictions form. 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 a vetting panel. This panel independent of those involved in the selection process itself and is made up of Senior Management within PBNI..

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.

8. Internal Advertisements

8.1 Application packs will be available to download from the PBNI intranet website, or by emailing recruitment@probation-ni.gov.uk or writing to PBNI Human Resources Department.

The application pack will include an:

1. Trawl Notice
2. Job Description
3. Application Form containing the essential and desirable criteria
4. Disability Discrimination Form (DDA1)

Form 4 above must be returned to the Human Resources Department along with the application form.

8.2 Applicants will be provided with the full details of the post including:

- Hours of work
- Location
- Grade of post
- Salary
- Job Description
- Essential and desirable criteria
- The application process
- The selection process
- The duration (if not permanent)
- Closing date for receipt of completed application forms

8.3 Applications will be accepted by post, email or hand delivery. Applications will be accepted by online submission once PBNI have an online recruitment system.

8.4 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.

8.5 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 and date. 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.

9. Shortlisting

9.1 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. Applicants who have declared they have a disability which has a **long term and substantial effect** will be offered a guaranteed Interview if they meet the essential criteria for the role.

9.2 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.

9.3 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.

9.4 Panel members will receive PBNI's panel member's guidance, PBNI's Equality and Diversity Board Brief for panel members and a Confidentiality Declaration, the last two of which should be signed.

10. Selection

10.1 The selection process will be open, transparent, fair, based upon merit and applied with consistency. The following methods will be considered:

- interview (and may include a presentation)
- a paper based exercise by a selection panel who will select and assess written applications in line with PBNI's scoring system (internal recruitment exercises)
- consideration of the skill mix of the applicant's current team as well as organisational need, with consideration of the Transfer and Mobility Policy and Procedure (internal recruitment exercises)
- random selection (internal recruitment exercises)

10.2 The selection panel will meet with Human Resources 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.

10.3 Panel members will receive PBNI's panel members' guidance. They will also receive a conflict of interest pro-forma, which should be signed.

10.4 All applicants in the same competition will be asked the same core questions at interview. Supplementary and probing 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 unless this is agreed as a reasonable adjustment.

10.5 Invite to Selection letters issued to candidates will advise of the selection process. The candidate will be advised of any competency areas to be assessed and it is in the candidate's own interests that the questions remain confidential throughout the process.

10.6 Assessment methods, including 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.

10.7 Panel Chairpersons must be able to provide Human Resources 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 to ensure a consistent approach in the management of competitions.

11. Time Management

- 11.1 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 the interview it is unlikely that another interview slot will be guaranteed.

12. Post-Selection Process

- 12.1 All candidates will be notified of the outcome normally within 10 working days of all interviews closing.
- 12.2 Appointable candidates will be placed in order of merit and conditional postings will be offered on this basis. Where there are more appointable candidates than the number of available posts they will be placed on a reserve list. PBNi reserves the right to place candidates in order to meet organisational need in specific circumstances, including appointing outside of merit order (where this is necessary and can be objectively justified).
- 12.3 If a candidate does not accept a conditional offer of employment, 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 merit list.
- 12.4 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 working days of issue or the offer may be withdrawn.

13. Feedback to candidates

- 13.1 Candidates will be informed of the opportunity to apply for feedback. Requests must be in writing (email requests to recruitment@probation-ni.gov.uk are acceptable).
- 13.2 Requested feedback will be provided in writing by Human Resources in a standardised letter format, normally within 15 working days.

14. Offer of Employment Process

- 14.2 All candidates will be required to produce the original relevant documentation required for the post, photocopies will not be accepted; if this information is not supplied it will result in the candidate being rejected from the competition. HR allows 10 working days for this information to be supplied by the candidate.

- 14.3 All Candidates who have been successful in the selection process will be contacted by Human Resources 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. In the case of Probation grade roles NISCC membership and restrictions will be checked as set out in the essential criteria.
- 13.5 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.
- 13.6 Once the applicable pre-employment checks have been completed satisfactory, then a firm offer of employment may be progressed and a start date agreed.

15. Appointment Process

- 15.1 The offer letter will include the terms & conditions of appointment. An offer 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;
Line Manager
 - d) Reporting instructions and starting salary;
 - e) Annual leave allowance;
 - f) Probationary period;
 - g) Mobility paragraph (if required);
 - h) Instructions to new entrants to bring P45;
 - i) Information on pension provision
 - j) Any allowances payable
 - k) Request to provide details of any reasonable adjustment requests;
 - l) Any necessary forms required for processing the appointment, and instructions for their completion and return
- 15.2 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.

16. Appeals Procedure

- 16.1 A candidate can use the appeals procedure if he/she can provide grounds that:
- the process used by PBNI is flawed
- or

- they have 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 working days from the date of the letter or email notifying the candidate of the outcome of the application.)

16.2 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.

16.3 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.