

Recruitment & Selection Policy November 2025

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1. Introduction

This Recruitment and Selection Policy applies to all recruitment activities within the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC). The policy sets out the principles, practices, and guidelines to ensure that recruitment and selection is conducted fairly, transparently, and free from discrimination.

This policy aims to attract the best talent for the PIRC, ensuring that appointments are made based on merit, suitability, and a fair and consistent process.

All appointments must be consistent with the PIRC's obligations as an employer under current legislation and in accordance with current Human Resource best practice.

This policy must be read and applied in line with the PIRC's Equal Opportunities policy and Data Protection policy.

2. Principles

The following principles apply to all selection processes:

- Fair – Decisions taken in the process of filling posts must comply with the PIRC's Equal Opportunities and Diversity strategy. The PIRC is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or trade union membership.
- Competitive - Opportunities must be advertised wherever possible, and external opportunities must be advertised publicly. Those undertaking higher duties on a temporary basis (e.g. through TRS or TP) typically cannot be made permanent into that post without undergoing a fair process.
- Consistent – Through evaluation and monitoring we will ensure that consistent standards are applied to all selection processes.
- Relevant – Selection techniques will be linked to the type of work at the level of the post.
- Evidence-based – All competitive selection decisions, both internal and external, including in-band and between band promotion, will be on the basis of suitability, based on evidence of knowledge, skills, behaviours, experience, and technical capability (including professional qualifications where relevant for specialist posts).
- Appointment will be based on merit, the best available person who is competent to carry out the role.
- Open and Transparent – Applicants will be clear what to expect and what is expected of them. Applicants must be given reasonable access to information about the role, its requirements, the selection process and a reasonable time in which to apply.

The process of selection and recruitment outlined in this policy will be the standard recruitment process followed by the PIRC unless exceptional circumstances prevail (**See Appendix A – Recruitment Flow Chart**).

Any potential conflict of interest must be declared as soon as it comes to light. Examples of likely conflicts of interest would be if a person directly involved in any stage of the selection process has (or has had) a personal relationship with one of the candidates, or is related to one of the candidates, or has prior knowledge of one of the candidates either in a professional or personal capacity which could, in any way, affect the decision they make. Normally the individual should stand down from the process as they are unable to give a fair assessment of the candidate.

If the candidate is from within the PIRC it is recognised that the recruiting manager will have prior knowledge of them. If however, any member of the panel feels that this prior knowledge would affect their impartiality in the recruitment process, then they should inform the Head of Corporate Services (HCS) who will make alternative arrangements.

Exceptions to selection via open and fair competition

Recruitment by fair and open competition and appointment on merit should always be pursued, where possible, to test the market for the best person for the job and to demonstrate that the appointment is above patronage and partiality. The primary objective of permitting certain exceptions from that rule is to provide flexibility where it is genuinely necessary to meet the needs of the PIRC, or where significant costs savings can be made (e.g. by avoiding two sets of agency fees for one introduction).

PIRC allows exceptions to the recruitment principles to be made in the following categories:

- Short-term appointments/secondments for a period not exceeding 2 years.
- Where there is clearly only one suitable person for the post and that person was originally recruited by open and fair competition.
- When a recruitment exercise would be a genuine waste of time and resources.
- Development opportunities.
- Surplus suitable candidates from a previous recruitment exercise may be offered a post if they have been placed in a “pool”, or if the first appointed candidate does not meet vetting requirements or withdraws from process. A “pool” is a list of suitable candidates who are fit to be appointed to a vacant post when available. It must be made clear to applicants that they have been placed in a pool and for how long, normally this will be for a maximum of 12 months.
- Disabled candidates who meet all the essential criteria for the post.
- Veterans scheme – former members of the armed forces who meet the minimum/essential criteria for the post.
- If a post previously designated as a fixed term post becomes a permanent post due to business needs then the post holder may be offered a permanent contract providing they have concluded their probation period successfully.

All exceptions have to be approved by the HCS and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

If there is any uncertainty about areas in which the exception to open and fair competition may apply, then advice should be sought from the HCS.

In addition, staff who are on a Performance Improvement Plan, both informal and formal, are not eligible to apply for an internal vacancy until such times that their performance has improved to the required standards.

3. Responsibilities

Staff role and responsibilities, along with those of managers and Human Resources are shown below. We will ensure all managers involved in this process are aware of this policy and their responsibilities under it.

Recruiting Manager	Human Resources
Be aware of this policy and your responsibilities under it.	Provide an appropriate level of advice, guidance and support to all managers and staff on the application of this policy
Seek advice and guidance from HR where appropriate.	Advise recruiting managers of possible adaptations to the recruitment and selection process as appropriate in line with Disability Confident scheme
Complete a Request to Recruit form (RTR) for all recruitment/changes to post.	Advise of any updates to this policy
Meet with HR Team to agree job description/advert and timetable for recruitment.	Meet with Recruiting Manager to agree job description/advert and timetable for recruitment.
Meet with HR Team to agree assessment and interview questions.	Meet with Recruiting Manager to agree assessment and interview questions.
Agree who will sift applications and agree timetable.	Liaise with recruiting manager on who will sift applications and agree timetable.
Act on advice and guidance, taking care specifically to implement adaptations advised by HR relating to the Disability Confident scheme. Plan the time frame you wish to recruit in.	
After assessment and interview agree final scoring and complete Interview Grading and Outcome form and ensure signed by panel.	To check Grading and Outcome form and sign off.
Liaise with HR Team in order to make the verbal offer to the successful candidate.	HR Team to put together offer of employment and vetting pack and correspond with successful candidate.

At all stages of the recruitment process HR will be responsible for ensuring that recruiting managers receive the support they require in order to conduct a consistent application of this policy. Recruiting managers and all panel members involved in recruitment and selection are required to familiarise themselves with this policy and the guidelines and must ensure that the principles are applied in every case. Recruiting managers and all panel members must have completed [Success Profile](#), [Inclusive Recruitment](#), [Disability equality for line managers](#), training modules on Pathways and PIRC Recruitment Training. Further training resources [here](#).

4. Identification of a Recruitment Need

Before recruitment commences, the relevant Head of Department (HoD), in liaison with the HR team, should complete a Request to Recruit (RTR), available on PIRC Intranet. The RTR form should detail the reason for the specific recruitment need, if the post should be full time, part-time, permanent, fixed term or a development opportunity, and how it will be funded. HR will liaise with Finance to confirm the funding position, then seek approval from Accountable Officer (HCS), Director of Operations and Commissioner.

5. Job Descriptions

The Recruiting Manager, usually (HoD), will be sent the current job description and candidate information pack of the post to be recruited to, by HR team. It is their responsibility to check and make any changes to the post's responsibilities, and success profiles required to perform the job against which candidates can be assessed throughout the recruitment process. Amended job description and candidate information pack should be returned to HR team. If significant changes are made to the job description this may require a job evaluation.

If recruiting to a new post, the job description will be drawn up by recruiting manager prior to any job evaluation process.

6. Advertising Vacancies

Posts can be advertised internally only or internally and externally concurrently. Internal only advertising will include placing an advert on the PIRC intranet. External advertising will include placing an advert on the PIRC's website and intranet alongside the external advertising sources which will maximise response rate for the post.

Posts should be advertised for a minimum of 10 working days, spanning two weekends. Advertising may extend beyond this minimum period or may be reduced to a minimum period of one week where there are urgent operational needs or where the advert is for a short term internal opportunity. Where a closing date has passed, candidates may request that a late application is considered, but this will be at the HR and the recruiting manager's discretion.

We are an equal opportunities employer and we request that all candidates complete the equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the application process. The equal opportunities information is kept confidentially out with Human Resources and is not seen by anyone involved in the recruitment process. We are committed to the Disability Confident Scheme and offer a guaranteed interview to any internal or external candidate who considers themselves to be disabled and meets all the essential requirements for the post.

Application packs are available in braille, large print and paper formats

Both the website and the intranet demonstrate the PIRC's commitment to flexible working by displaying the "Happy to Talk Flexible Working" logo. Candidates may make a request for a flexible working pattern to be considered at any stage of the process, however there is no guarantee that the request will be granted and an offer of employment may be made that does not include the requested pattern. Internal candidates who currently work flexibly should not assume that the working pattern that they are currently on will transfer automatically to the new post.

7. Selecting Candidates for Assessment and Interview

Candidates (both internal and external) will be required to apply via our online job portal on our website. Applications will comprise of a CV and a Supporting statement. Both the CV and Supporting statement should provide clear evidence of how candidates meet the Success Profile criteria listed in the job advert. Hard copies of the application form will be made available on request.

Sifting applications is a key stage of the recruitment process and is the responsibility of the recruiting manager, though members of the selection panel may be involved. This must be carried out in a fair and objective way, using the same selection criteria for each applicant. The criteria must be the same as published in the advert. No additional criteria can be added at this stage.

Applications will be assessed and scored against the Success Profile criteria set out in the job advert. Three key elements are assessed to identify the best candidate for the role, these are:

- [Behaviours](#)
- [Experience](#)
- [Technical](#)

Not all elements are relevant to every role, so individual job will include a specific mix of elements to be assessed based on the requirements of the position.

HR will arrange an initial meeting with the recruiting manager and any additional selection panel members to:

- ensure everyone fully understands the requirements for the post
- explain the sifting and scoring processes
- set a benchmark score for sifting
- ensure panel members have the appropriate training

When scoring applications:

- the hiring manager decides how to divide up applications between panel members for scoring, if required
- panel members base their decisions solely on what is provided in the application form and be consistent

See Appendix B for Scoring scale for sifting.

Once scoring is complete the panel should meet again to agree the final shortlist and complete the Selection for Interview form.

Applicants who score the set benchmark or above will be invited for interview. Candidates who score a 1 (does not meet requirements of post) in any of the criteria are unsuccessful and will not be invited to interview/assessment. If a score of 1 is awarded, each criteria must still be scored. Feedback on applications will not be provided to external candidates. Internal candidates who are not selected for interview will be informed of this decision by the recruiting manager and will have the opportunity to receive feedback on the reasons for the decision.

HR will check and ensure that this form is completed and signed by the recruiting manager, and any other members of the selection panel involved in the scoring.

All candidates who apply under the 'Disability Confident' scheme and the Veterans scheme and meet all the essential criteria for the post, will be invited to interview. Candidates who have a disability and are invited to sit an assessment or attend an interview will be asked if any reasonable adjustments are required.

All information from candidates must be treated as confidential and should not be disclosed. Any information about the recruitment process should also be treated as confidential and should not be disclosed to anyone who is not involved in the process.

8. Assessment and Interview

All interviewer's should be trained, competent interviews and are normally internal members of staff. Occasionally interviewers may be from external bodies when required e.g. for a senior position.

Interview panels will have at least 2 members, the recruiting manager and a member of the HR team. Interview panels may be made up of three panel members when required e.g. for a senior position. HR will provide a consistent approach to recruitment across the PIRC. They should also be able to answer any HR related questions asked by the candidate.

PIRC is committed to embedding and advancing diversity and inclusion across the organisation. This includes providing promotion opportunities to all colleagues, fairly and equitably.

When selecting panels, thought should be given to whether it is balanced and how colleagues from a range of backgrounds, characteristics and experiences can be included, where appropriate.

Diverse panel members offer different perspectives on the candidate's performance. This gives a more thorough assessment of role suitability and helps reduce group biases in decision-making.

All panel members must be familiar with the PIRC's Recruitment and Selection procedures, and have completed all required training [here](#).

The interview and assessment will be based on the Success Profile criteria outlined within the job advert and one other form of assessment. This allows recruiting managers to check skills and knowledge which cannot be assessed by interview alone.

There are different forms of evidence-gathering and job-specific tasks which can be used, either to support promotions or to measure specific skills. These are best used to assess skills required in the role that may be more difficult to measure by an interview.

Additional forms of assessment include exercises such as:

- presentations
- group exercises
- role-playing exercises

- job-related simulation

The type of assessment used will depend on the post, and may be conducted before, during or after the interview.

Any assessment must assess the competencies and/or criteria listed in the advert – additional elements cannot be added at a later date.

HR team will assist recruiting managers with choosing and facilitating the assessments.

A scoring matrix will be provided for the assessment (see Appendix C).

Interview questions will be agreed by the panel beforehand. Each panel member will be provided with an electronic version of the interview pack at least 2 days prior to the interview. They will also be provided with a printed copy of the interview pack the day before the interview. The panel should meet in advance of the interview to assign questions to individuals. Interviewers should assign scores to each candidate response to the questions independently before discussing them as a group.

To ensure a fair and consistent experience for all groups of candidates, interviews should:

- Be consistent and structured - ask all candidates a set of questions that have already been agreed by the panel. These questions must link to the criteria and competencies set out in the job advert. Don't add any additional requirements.
- Be fair and balanced - all candidates must have an opportunity to perform to their best. For some, this means making adjustments to the process. Panel members should complete the [Inclusive Recruitment module on Pathways](#) before sitting on a panel.
- Enable the candidates to perform to their best - the purpose of the interview is to gather evidence to select a candidate on merit. Help the candidate relax as much as possible by providing relevant information in advance.
- Be a two-way process - the interview is also an opportunity for candidates to find out more about the role, especially for external candidates. The external recruitment market is very competitive, so the panel should think about the impression they're presenting of the organisation. Make sure you leave enough time for candidates to ask their questions too.

Things to avoid in interviews

Here are some common pitfalls to avoid when you're interviewing:

- Self-fulfilling prophecy effect - avoid asking questions designed to confirm initial impressions of candidates, gained either before the interview or in its early stages.
- Stereotyping effect - avoid assumptions about candidates based on personal information.
- Halo and horns effect - avoid judging candidates as good or bad in some aspects. This is often replicated across the board leading to unbalanced decisions.
- Contrast effect - avoid allowing the experience of interviewing one candidate to impact the way you interview others who you see later in the process.
- Similar-to-me effect - it's a common bias to give preference to candidates perceived as having a similar background, career history or attitudes to you. This can also be

an issue where candidates have similar reference points (such as Civil Service experience). It's vital to challenge yourself on the evidence that candidates supply.

- Personal liking effect - avoid making decisions on the basis of whether you felt a rapport with a candidate or your view on managing them. Keep focussed on the evidence gathered during the process.

All panel members will be required to complete and sign an "Interview Grading and Outcome" form. Comments made on this form will be used if candidates request feedback. This form will be checked and signed by HR.

Rescheduling interviews

Candidates can request their interview or assessment to be rescheduled. All requests will be considered on their own merit and granted where possible.

If a candidate fails to attend and does not make contact within 24 hours after their scheduled interview, you can assume the candidate has withdrawn from the process.

Assessing criteria and making the appointment

After each [interview](#) and [assessment](#), the selection panel should discuss the candidate against the required criteria.

Ranking and selection

The hiring manager normally acts as the chairperson, however another panel member can take on this role.

The role of the chairperson is to discuss each candidate with the selection panel immediately after the assessment and agree scoring and rank all candidates in order of merit based on the evidence obtained in the assessment. If appropriate, reserve candidates should also be agreed

Candidates can request feedback on their assessment and interview. As such it is important that the Interview Grading and Outcome forms are completed objectively.

Once HR have received the agreed and signed Interview Grading and Outcome form they will check all correct and the recruiting manager can telephone the successful candidate to make the conditional offer of employment. Recruiting managers may also be asked to contact reserve candidates where appropriate.

9. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Applicants can use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to support their application, but all statements and examples provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from their own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, and presented as their own) applications will be withdrawn and internal candidates may be subject to disciplinary action.

Candidate guidance is available at Appendix D for more information on acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI in recruitment .

10. Reasonable Adjustments

Eligibility for interview or assessment adjustments

We want the PIRC workplace to be an environment where all candidates can perform to their best in the selection process. Disabled candidates may face additional challenges or accessibility barriers in the recruitment process that can be accommodated with adjustments.

Recruiting managers are not expected to decide whether adjustments are appropriate for a candidate or to understand the candidate's disability. The candidate does not have to disclose the reason for the request or any details of their condition. If information is disclosed, it must only be used for the adjustment and not shared without the candidate's permission.

Recruiting managers will be guided by the candidate when implementing adjustments. Candidates will be the experts in how their disability impacts them. HR team will advise on appropriate adjustments that can be implemented. Complex cases for adjustments, including adjustments that may need to be refused, will be dealt with by the HR team.

It is important that you keep the candidate informed. Let them know their request has been received, is being prioritised with the relevant team and when you will provide them with an update.

Responding to a candidate request for adjustments

If a candidate's request can be accommodated the candidate will be contacted as soon as possible to provide reassurance and to gather the information required. Preparing for an interview or assessment can be disproportionately stressful for disabled candidates. You should prioritise arranging the adjustments and inform the candidate when all preparations are in place.

Candidates have the right to request adjustments at any stage in the recruitment process.

Examples of interview or assessment adjustments

Adjustments are tailored specifically to a candidate's access needs, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Candidates may ask what the standard time given is for those with similar access needs, this can be provided as a guideline. The following examples can be used as a guide. This is not an exhaustive list.

Some examples of adjustments are:

- providing extra time to complete assessments
- allowing a break in between parts of the assessment or interview
- providing interview questions 24 hours in advance
- ensuring accessible spaces for in-person interviews – such as ground floor rooms
- providing a physical copy of the assessment by mail

If a candidate asks for questions in advance of the interview they should be notified that additional probing and follow-up questions may still be asked.

In some cases, a candidate may request an alternative format to the assessment. This is allowed as long as the same competencies are being assessed. There is no requirement for

all candidates to complete the same type of assessment. For example, a candidate with dyslexia may request a role-play rather than a written exercise.

11. Offer of Employment

Once the interviews and assessments have taken place, the successful candidate will be contacted with a conditional offer of employment, which will be subject to Non Police Personnel Vetting Level 3 (NPPVL3) and Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) clearances, medical clearance and satisfactory references being received. Further information contained on our [Employee Vetting and References Policy](#). A start date will be discussed on receipt of relevant security clearances, medical clearance and references. For internal candidates moving to a new post, discussions will take place between HR/current line manager and new line manager to agree a start date.

A candidate who fails vetting or security clearance will not be employed in any capacity with the PIRC.

12. References

Two references will be requested for the successful candidate if they are recruited externally, to cover a five year period. At least one referee should be the candidates' most recent employer where applicable. If the referees detailed are no longer available, or references cannot be obtained, additional referees will be required. Where satisfactory references are not received before the suggested start date, the individual may be permitted to commence employment. Where unsatisfactory references are received, the offer of employment may be withdrawn or the employment may be terminated. References will not be taken for internal candidates, however all internal candidates must discuss their application with their line manager.

13. Right to Work in the UK

PIRC will only employ workers who are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom. All applicants will be required to provide PIRC with appropriate documentation or an online right to work check share code, wherever possible, to prove their eligibility to work in the UK.

14. Feedback

All candidates can request and receive feedback after assessment and interview stage. Internal candidates may ask for feedback on their application, from the recruiting manager. Feedback for candidates will be taken from the Interview Grading and Outcome form.

15. Additional Information

Employees who are currently on a leave of absence e.g. Maternity leave or long – term sick (over 4 weeks) will be sent details of any vacancies that should arise while they are absent unless the employee does not wish to receive these.

Recruitment records will be retained for 12 months from the conclusion of the process. This is in line with our retention policy.

16. Non Compliance

Individuals who do not believe that the principles set out in this recruitment and selection policy have been correctly applied during a recruitment process, may appeal directly to the HCS who

will investigate and respond in writing within 21 days. In cases where the HCS has been directly involved in the recruitment exercise, the appeal will be considered by either one of the other Heads of Department or Director of Operations.

17. Implementation, Monitoring and Review of this Procedure

The Head of Corporate Services has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this procedure, which will be reviewed on a regular basis by the policy owner following its implementation, and may be changed from time to time. Any queries or comments about this procedure should be addressed to the HR@pirc.gov.scot

18. Benchmarks Used in Policy Formulation

- Previous PIRC Policy
- SG Resourcing Policy
- CIPD
- ACAS

19. Communication & Contacts

This policy will be shared with all employees within PIRC and will be published on our website and intranet.. Queries should be addressed to HR Team at HR@pirc.gov.scot.

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Appendix A – Recruitment Flow Chart

Appendix B – Scoring Scale for Sifting

Appendix C - Scoring for Candidate Assessments

Appendix D - Use of Artificial Intelligence