

# Appointing chief police officers

The guidance is a reference for those making chief police officer appointments. It supports with designing and delivering the process.

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## Using the guidance

This guidance describes the principles, processes and responsibilities required for appointing:

- chief constables (CCs)
- deputy chief constables (DCCs)
- assistant chief constables (ACCs)
- the Metropolitan Police Service commissioner, deputy commissioner (DC), assistant commissioners (ACs), deputy assistant commissioners (DACs) and commanders
- the City of London Police commissioner, ACs and commanders

This guidance can be used:

- by police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and CCs, while recognising that they are responsible for managing their own appointment processes in accordance with police regulations and other legislative requirements
- to provide advice and guidance to PCCs and CCs on how to design and deliver a chief police officer appointment process that is underpinned by the principles of [merit, fairness and openness](#)

This guidance is applicable to chief police officer appointments in England and Wales. While this guidance is not designed to support chief police officer appointments for Police Scotland, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and non-Home Office forces, it may be used as a helpful guide where appropriate. Similarly, this guidance may be helpful in informing senior police staff appointment processes.

The guidance is a non-prescriptive reference for those making chief officer appointments. Police and crime commissioners can review this document to identify their specific roles and responsibilities, as well as the essential stages in designing and delivering an appointment

process.

Nothing in this guidance prohibits the application of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) 'Advice note 8: Retirement and re-joiner guidance', published in July 2022.

The College will provide support to PCCs and CCs making chief police officer appointments – please contact [hub@college.police.uk](mailto:hub@college.police.uk)

## Roles and responsibilities

PCCs are responsible for the appointment of CCs. In the context of police force areas where police governance falls under the remit of an elected mayor, the mayor will be responsible for the appointment of CCs and may appoint a deputy mayor for crime and policing to exercise functions on their behalf.

The City of London Corporation is responsible for the appointment of the Commissioner of the City of London Police. CCs are responsible for the appointment of other chief officer roles.

## Merit, fairness and openness

PCCs and CCs must observe the principles of merit, fairness and openness when selecting and assessing chief police officers. The definition of these principles is based on those contained in the [Civil Service Commission recruitment principles](#), published in April 2018.

- Merit means appointing the best available person judged against the essential criteria for the role. No one should be appointed to do a job unless they are competent to do it and the job must be offered to the person who would do it best. The successful candidate should be chosen from a sufficiently strong and diverse pool of eligible candidates.
- Fairness means there must be no bias in assessing candidates. Selection processes must be objective, impartial and applied consistently.
- Openness means that job opportunities must be advertised publicly. The aim of the advertisement should be to attract a strong field of eligible applicants. Potential candidates must be given reasonable access to information about the job, its requirements and the selection process. In open competitions, anyone who wishes must be allowed to apply.

By ensuring that these principles underpin chief police officer appointments, PCCs and CCs will have confidence in what they are measuring. They will also have confidence that candidates are

assessed in a consistent way, and that there is a transparent and justifiable reason why the appointed candidate is the right candidate for the role.

## Substantive and temporary appointments

This guidance applies to the permanent appointment of chief police officers into a substantive post. A police officer who has not demonstrated the baseline standard on the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) can be temporarily appointed into a chief police officer role.

Examples of this include where there is a short-term unforeseen requirement to promote an individual temporarily into a chief police officer role for operational reasons, so that service delivery is not compromised, or where there is a requirement to appoint a chief police officer temporarily to oversee an organisational or operational project. In these circumstances, that officer must attend the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) development centre within 12 months of that temporary appointment or at the next available opportunity.

## Movement between forces

Movement between forces in England and Wales as a chief police officer, including the use of secondments, can bring benefits through exchanging experience of policing in other areas and understanding of other operating environments. Movement between forces is not mandatory, and there can be challenges and barriers associated with this. However, PCCs and CCs should consider how they can encourage applicants from outside their force to participate in their chief police officer appointment process.

Movement between forces at chief officer level is not the only means by which a chief police officer can bring a different perspective. Experience in another force at superintendent or chief superintendent level can also bring benefits of experience of senior leadership in another area.

## Appointing a chief police officer

This guidance can be used to support with planning the chief police officer appointment and with the application process.

[Go to preparing to appoint a chief police officer guidance](#)

[Go to the chief police officer application process](#)

## Tags

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