

Preparing to appoint a chief police officer

Guidance on planning, advertising and support when preparing to appoint a chief police officer.

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Planning

As part of the pre-appointment planning, a police and crime commissioners (PCC) or chief constable (CC) will define the requirements of their vacancy and identify who is best suited to sit on the appointment panel. It is for the PCC or CC to decide how they wish to run their appointment process. While they may devolve responsibility for putting the appointment process in place to a suitably qualified person, they maintain oversight and hold responsibility for ensuring it is done.

When a PCC is planning a CC appointment, they may consider contacting the His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) responsible for their region, who can provide an overview of efficiency and effectiveness of the force. This information may help to inform the design and delivery of the appointment process. The College can support this activity in advising how information provided by the HMI can be incorporated into assessment activities.

PCCs and CCs should be mindful of potential scheduling conflicts to maximise the ability of potential applicants to participate in the process. This could include local and national events. Forces participating in the police leadership programme (PLP) – stage 5 (executive leaders) will commit to not run chief officer appointment processes during module delivery.

The appointment process

- The police professional profile, leadership standards and the [Competency and Values Framework \(CVF\)](#) should be used to develop a job description and to define what is being sought in potential candidates for chief officer roles. The needs and values specific to the force should also be reflected in the appointment process.
- For CC appointments, HMIs can provide useful information to inform the design and delivery of the appointment.
- Assessment criteria for the appointment should be identified in advance of launching the appointment process. This criteria should reflect the level of the vacancy, as well as current and future demands on the force.

- A chief police officer appointment process must comply with the principles of merit, fairness and openness.
- A chief police officer appointment process must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty. Equality, diversity and inclusion should be proactively considered in the design and delivery of the appointment process.
- A chief police officer appointment process must adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Support from the College

The College will provide the following support to PCCs and CCs making chief officer appointments:

- guidance for appointing chief officers
- a central point for advertising all chief officer vacancies and contacting potential candidates
- data collection to support national workforce planning and to report on chief officer appointment activity
- specialist recruitment and assessment advice and support, including:
 - support to PCCs and CCs in establishing assessment criteria for an appointment process
 - design of selection exercises and identification of appropriate methods based on issues facing the force
 - briefing and training for appointment panel members
 - practical support in delivering selection process activity
 - psychometric assessment of applicants
- guidance, briefing and training for independent members
- guidance, briefing and training for delivering feedback to candidates following the appointment process
- guidance for inducting and onboarding of chief officers following the appointment process
- PCCs and CCs must ensure that they comply with data collection requirements to support national workforce planning.

Advertising

A permanent substantive chief police officer vacancy should be advertised as required. There is no need to hold chief police officer appointment processes to coincide with the conclusion of the PLP –

stage 5 (executive leaders). Permanent substantive chief police officer vacancies should be advertised nationally.

PCCs and CCs should consider what opportunities they can provide to encourage applications and generate a strong and diverse pool of applicants (particularly from external applicants, to maximise the benefits for the service from a wider talent pool and movement between forces). All applicants should be provided with equal opportunities and access to information about the role and the force, regardless of whether they are external or internal candidates.

- Adverts should specify the date by which applications must be made.
- Adverts should be placed on a national public-facing website or within another national publication that deals with policing matters.
- Adverts should be open for a minimum of three weeks.

Eligibility

Individuals who previously qualified as eligible for a chief police officer appointment by virtue of successfully completing the senior police national assessment centre (senior PNAC) and the strategic command course (SCC) will be eligible for substantive appointment to a chief police officer role.

Police officers who have successfully completed the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) as part of cohorts 1 and 2 will be eligible for substantive appointment to a chief police officer role. Police officers who have demonstrated the baseline standard on the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) development centre and successfully completed cohort 3 of the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) will also be eligible for substantive appointment to a chief police officer role.

Police officers who have demonstrated the baseline standard on the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) development centre can be appointed into chief police officer roles on a temporary basis. A police officer who is appointed temporarily into a chief police officer role must commence the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) within 12 months of temporary appointment or at the next available opportunity if not already on the programme.

On successful completion of the programme, they can be substantively appointed with no further appointment process, assuming they were originally selected in accordance with this guidance, via an open and competitive recruitment process that was underpinned by the principles of [merit](#),

fairness and openness.

A police officer who has been temporarily appointed to a chief police officer role who fails to achieve the required standard as determined by the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) assessment requirements will withdraw from the programme. Under these circumstances, they will revert to their previous substantive rank as soon as practicable.

It is not mandatory for an individual on the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) to apply for a chief officer role while on the programme. However, it is expected that individuals on the programme are joining because they intend to apply for roles at chief officer level within the following 24 months.

Chief officer appointment processes for Police Scotland, Police Service of Northern Ireland and non-Home Office forces are not required to follow the processes outlined in this guidance. While individuals from these policing organisations can participate in the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders), they have their own legislation, process and procedures relating to chief officer appointments. It is recommended that senior police staff appointment processes follow the guidance outlined in this document, but there is no requirement to do so.

Overseas officers who are eligible in terms of rank and overseas force can be appointed into a chief police officer role on a temporary basis, with the expectation that they start the programme within 12 months or start the next available programme following their appointment.

Overseas police forces and ranks that are approved for chief police officer appointments in England and Wales can be found within [The Appointment of Chief Officers of Police \(Overseas Police Forces\) Regulations 2014](#). There are no restrictions on moving to another force or role while an individual is on the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders).

- Applicants for chief police officer appointments in England and Wales must meet the eligibility criteria.
- Applicants for CCs or commissioner must have held the rank of ACC, commander or a more senior rank in a UK police force, or must meet the eligibility requirements as an overseas officer.

Conduct

PCCs and CCs should consider all applicants' disciplinary records and should be aware of any outstanding allegations or ongoing incidents at the outset of an appointment process (during

application and shortlisting). The PCC or CC must review the barred and advisory lists to confirm that an individual is eligible for appointment. Applicants must consent to a review of their disciplinary record as part of the appointment process.

CCs should satisfy themselves that they have completed a comprehensive review of the disciplinary record, including both live and concluded matters, of any chief police officer they appoint. A CC should inform the PCC if they appoint a chief officer with a disciplinary record that is live. They should consider whether it would be appropriate to inform the PCC of any concluded matters that could have a potential effect on the individual's role in policing and on their force, region and community. A PCC may consider asking CCs whether there are any disciplinary matters – live or concluded – that could have a potential impact on their force, region and community.

It is the responsibility of the PCC or CC to decide whether to appoint a candidate with evidence of a live or concluded disciplinary in circumstances where an individual is subject to ongoing investigation. The PCC or CC should complete a risk-based assessment that considers the circumstances of the disciplinary, the potential effect on the individual's role in policing and the impact that the appointment would have on their force, region and community.

A candidate appointed to a chief officer role should be re-vetted as part of the appointment process, in accordance with the [Vetting Code of Practice](#) and the [authorised professional practice \(APP\) on Vetting](#).

- PCCs and CCs should consider an applicant's disciplinary record at the outset of the appointment process.
- Applicants for chief police officer appointments will not be eligible if they are named on the barred and advisory lists.
- CCs should inform the PCC if they appoint a chief police officer with a disciplinary record that is live.
- A candidate appointed to a chief police officer role should be re-vetted as part of the appointment process.

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