

Chief police officer application process

Guidance and support about the application and shortlisting process when appointing a chief police officer.

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Application and shortlisting

All applicants should complete a formal application for a chief police officer vacancy. The information in the application should be used to:

- determine the extent to which the applicant meets the requirements for the role
- confirm their eligibility
- identify whether they should progress to the next stage of the appointment process

The appointment panel should use a structured evidence-based assessment method to review all applications against the eligibility requirements and the predetermined assessment criteria, and to identify suitable candidates to take forward to the next stage of the appointment process. All applicants should also complete a biographical data monitoring form, which will be submitted to the College and to either the force or the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for national monitoring and reporting purposes. However, this should not be shared with the appointment panel.

Following the shortlisting of applicants, it may be helpful to consider asking a representative from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to provide an overview of the police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) reports from shortlisted applicants current force and how this reflects the information provided by His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) during the pre-planning phase.

- All individuals who are eligible to apply for a chief police officer appointment vacancy must be allowed to apply and progress to shortlisting.
- Only applicants who meet the eligibility requirements and predetermined assessment criteria should progress to subsequent stages of the appointment process.
- Forces and OPCCs must provide biographical data to the College relating to all chief officer appointment applications.

Police leadership programme (PLP) reports

The College will produce objectively assessed evaluations of an individual's performance on the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) in the form of an end-programme report.

The end-programme report is endorsed by a member of the programme directing team. This report will be submitted as part of a chief police officer appointment process. Individuals applying for a chief police officer appointment during their time on the programme will be provided with an interim report. The interim report will provide a simple summary of a delegate's progress through the programme and will include a transcript containing assessment outcomes that are available at the time of request.

End-programme reports will be provided to individuals on successful completion of the programme. Interim reports must be requested by the individual and only in support of engagement with a chief police officer appointment process.

The end-programme report can provide a helpful additional source of information for appointment panels when considering the performance of individuals in the chief police officer appointment process, such as:

- confirming eligibility
- areas for exploration during the appointment process
- a source of insight in relation to strengths and areas for development when in post
- to complement evidence gathered through the appointment process itself

It is anticipated that these reports will be most useful as individuals graduate from the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) and are promoted into a substantive assistant chief constable (ACC) role. Panels should be mindful of the currency of information in these reports as an individual progresses in their chief officer career to the ranks of deputy chief constable (DCC) and chief constable (CC).

Applicants for chief officer roles will not be required to submit their Executive Leadership Development Report, and these should not be requested as part of a chief officer appointment process. This is to avoid frustrating the intended purpose of the portfolio, which is to facilitate honest reflection and development, and to reduce the risk of biases being introduced to the appointment process.

Individuals who are eligible by virtue of having successfully completed senior police national assessment centre (senior PNAC) and the strategic command course (SCC) will not be required to submit an additional report. However, they may be asked to provide reports from senior PNAC and the SCC instead of the PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) end-programme report. Panels should be mindful of the currency of information in senior PNAC and SCC reports.

- PLP – stage 5 (executive leaders) reports will be made available to an appointment panel during a chief police officer appointment process.
- Programme reports may be used to inform readiness and areas for development of an individual. They must not be the sole source of evidence for an appointment decision.

Assessment

The aim of the assessment is to challenge candidates and to test that they meet the necessary requirements to perform the role. The police and crime commissioner (PCC) or CC will determine how assessment takes place and what methods are used in a chief officer appointment process. Assessment methods should be selected or designed that specifically elicit the agreed assessment criteria in a fair and consistent way.

PCCs and CCs should balance the need to deliver a robust and rigorous process without being unfairly onerous. All applicants should be assessed against the agreed predetermined assessment criteria. Design and delivery of assessments should allow both external and internal candidates an equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the role.

The [Code of Ethics](#) should be embedded into the appointment process to ensure that applicants are assessed against behaviours associated with effective and ethical performance in the police service. This can be achieved by using the [Competency and values framework \(CVF\)](#) as the assessment criteria.

- Assessment criteria for chief police officer appointments should reflect the level of the vacancy and should be drawn from – or link to – the police professional profile, CVF and executive leadership standards.
- Appointment panel members should take part in performance benchmarking activity prior to making their assessment. This could involve discussing and confirming as a panel what good and poor performance looks like, as well as how this relates to assessment outcomes and decision making.

- Assessment tools should provide the opportunity for candidates to display the evidence defined as required for performance in the role.
- Assessment tools should be designed to assess the specific competencies and values they are supposed to measure.
- All candidates should undertake the same assessment.
- All appointment panel members should follow a structured, evidence-based assessment methodology that clearly identifies how the candidate's evidence has contributed to the assessment outcome.
- The same assessment criteria should be applied consistently across all candidates.
- Candidates' performance should be evaluated objectively using a predetermined rating scale that allows appointment panel members to distinguish meaningfully between effective and ineffective performance.

Appointment panel

The PCC makes the decision about whom to appoint to a vacant CC role, while the CC makes this decision for all other chief officer vacancies.

To support them in making that decision, the PCC or CC will convene an appointment panel. The appointment panel will challenge and test that the candidate meets the necessary requirements to perform the role.

Working with the PCC or CC, the appointment panel will:

- shortlist applicants against the agreed assessment criteria
- assess all shortlisted candidates against the agreed assessment criteria
- consider which candidate most closely meets the appointment criteria

The PCC or CC will determine who sits on their appointment panel to support them in testing and challenging applicants' suitability for the role. Appointment panel members should be diverse and should have the necessary skills to make a fair assessment of candidates for senior police leadership roles. All panel members should complete briefing or training prior to a chief officer appointment process, to ensure compliance with the principles of [merit, fairness and openness](#).

The PCC or CC should ensure that no conflict of interest exists between the appointment panel members and applicants prior to shortlisting.

The appointment panel must include at least one independent panel member. Independent panel members are part of the appointment panel and must also be experienced in selection and assessment practices, as they are responsible for determining the extent to which the appointment process is conducted, in line with the principles of merit, fairness and openness. For CC appointments, the independent panel member will produce a written report on the appointment process, which should be submitted to the police and crime panel (PCP) at the same time as the name of the preferred candidate. The report should explicitly address the appointment principles of **merit, fairness and openness**.

The report should also address the extent to which the panel was able to challenge the preferred candidates and test that they meet the necessary requirements to perform the role. The independent member for all other chief officer appointments (ACC and DCC) is not required to produce a written report on the appointment process, but CCs may consider requesting this.

The independent panel member should not be:

- the PCC
- a member of the PCC's staff
- a member of the PCP
- a member of Parliament
- a local councillor
- a serving or retired police officer or member of police staff
- a civil servant
- a member of the National Assembly for Wales, Northern Ireland Assembly or Scottish Government
- HMICFRS staff
- Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) commissioner or staff
- College of Policing staff

While individuals in these roles are not eligible to be an independent panel member, they can sit on the appointment panel. A PCC or CC may identify a suitable independent member based on the guidance provided by the College.

The appointment panel for a CC vacancy must include a senior policing advisor. The senior policing advisor is an individual with professional policing knowledge, who will provide the PCC with advice

at an appropriate level from a policing perspective. The senior policing advisor may be:

- the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the College of Policing
- HMIs
- CC members of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- recently retired CCs

If a recently retired CC is acting as senior policing advisor, it is recommended that the individual has retired within the previous two years, unless they have relevant experience in UK policing or the wider criminal justice system since retirement that demonstrates their ability to operate as a credible strategic leader. CCs may wish to consider including a senior policing advisor in their appointment panel for DCC and ACC roles, although this is not a requirement.

The appointment panel

- The appointment panel should be suitably experienced and competent to assess the suitability of a senior police leader and to understand the needs of the force and its community.
- The appointment panel for all chief police officer appointments must include an independent member.
- The appointment panel for a CC vacancy must include a senior policing advisor.
- The appointment panel should receive briefing or training in selection and assessment practices prior to a chief police officer appointment process, specifically assessment principles, assessment methodology, assessment criteria and rating scales, and assessment logistics.
- Appointment panel members should be actively inclusive and explicitly mindful of barriers and biases that could influence their assessment.
- Pre-appointment panel member briefing or training should be provided by a suitably qualified person.

Decision-making

The appointment process should use a robust decision-making model based on evidence of the agreed assessment criteria. PCCs and CCs will need to identify how ratings are collated and to identify a point that distinguishes between a candidate who has met the standard and one who has not.

- The decision on whom to appoint is the responsibility of the PCC or CC.

- The decision should be based on the assessments made by the appointment panel and information gained through the appointment process to demonstrate that decision making is based on merit.
- The same decision-making model should be applied consistently across all candidates.

Feedback

All candidates who participate in a chief officer appointment process should receive clear and timely feedback, so that they can build it into their continuing professional development. Feedback should consist of a constructive evaluation of their performance in the appointment process based on their performance in all assessment components.

- Feedback should be timely and can be provided in a written format, via telephone or face to face.
- PCCs and CCs should also capture feedback from candidates undertaking their appointment processes.
- Feedback should accurately reflect what a candidate said and did in the appointment process.
- Individuals providing feedback must have received training about how to deliver effective constructive feedback.

Scrutiny

The process to appoint a chief police officer will be subject to a process of scrutiny throughout the appointment process and following the identification of the preferred candidate (or candidates).

The appointment of a CC will be made by a PCC, subject to a confirmation hearing by the PCP, who will satisfy themselves that:

- the process was properly conducted
- the process adhered to the principles of merit, fairness and openness
- the preferred candidate meets the requirements of the role

In accordance with the policing protocol, CCs must consult with the PCC on their proposed chief officer appointment.

The College will produce an annual report to summarise national chief officer appointment activity, including – but not limited to – the number of appointments that have taken place, anonymised

biographical summary data relating to applications and appointments, and themes arising from appointments.

- All chief police officer appointment processes must be scrutinised to ensure they comply with the principle of merit, fairness and openness.
- PCPs have power of veto of a PCC's first preferred candidate.

Induction and onboarding

Following a chief officer appointment process, a PCC or CC should ensure that an induction plan is developed to support the onboarding process. This will provide newly appointed chief officers with early and ongoing support, guidance and learning to transition effectively into their new role and force.

- Feedback from the appointment process can be used to inform an individual's continuing professional development.
- Induction activities should be designed to reflect the needs of the individual and their force.

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