

Appointments to independent roles, and volunteer opportunities in the OPCC

A best practice framework for promoting diversity and providing equality of opportunity for people to contribute to the work of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as an independent appointee or volunteer.

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Author:	Eleanor Tanner
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Introduction

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is committed to enabling and supporting members of our communities to get involved with and to support the Police and the wider functions of the criminal justice system.

As well as a range of volunteering opportunities provided by the Devon and Cornwall Police Force, there are a number of opportunities for people to get involved in the work of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Getting involved with the work of the PCC provides us a direct link and insight into the communities that the PCC is elected to serve.

Many of these opportunities are very important roles required in legislation and provide for public transparency into the activities of the police and wider criminal justice system in our local area. The invaluable insight provided by people undertaking these roles help the organisations involved to learn and to improve their performance.

Getting involved in public service is therefore of great value to local communities. It also brings a diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge into public organisations. Volunteers and appointees to independent roles bring new perspectives, opinions and ideas and provide objectivity and impartiality to police governance.

The purpose of this framework is to make transparent the principles that the Office of the PCC will adhere to in selecting and appointing to such roles, and to guide those responsible for making the appointments.

Selection process best practice

Selection processes should be designed to ensure that the best people, from the widest possible pool of candidates are appointed.

Responsibility for appointments

The ultimate responsibility for appointments and the selection of those appointed rests with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive may delegate the selection and appointment process to a suitably competent person or panel of people (henceforth referred to as the selection panel).

Principles of appointment

The following principles will be followed for all selection processes.

Selflessness

When making appointments, selection panels should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Selection panels should avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any conflicting interests and relationships.

Merit

All appointments should be governed by the principle of appointment on merit. This means operating a process that provides a choice of high quality candidates, drawn from a strong, diverse field, whose skills, experiences and qualities have been judged to meet the purpose of the role in question.

Openness

The processes for making appointments will be open and transparent.

Diversity

Appointments should reflect the diversity of the society in which we live and appointments should be made taking account of the need to appoint a representative group which includes a balance of skills and backgrounds.

Assurance

There should be established assurance processes with appropriate checks and balances to monitor appointment processes, and ensure that appointments are made in accordance with this framework.

Fairness

Selection processes should be fair, impartial and each candidate must be assessed against the same criteria for the role in question.

Pre-process considerations

The Chief Executive will be consulted before a competition opens for any new role, to agree the role description, the length of tenure and any remuneration, and the appropriate person or panel of people to undertake the selection process.

Where the composition of a panel or committee to which a role is being appointed is not already specified in the Governance Framework or other relevant formal documentation, the Chief Executive will agree the composition of the panel or committee being appointed to, and other matters such as tenure of role and any potential remuneration.

Selection panels are required to inform themselves of the make-up and diversity of the current group that is being appointed to in order to inform the selection process.

Selection panels should agree how the post will be advertised and the selection process to be used.

Assessment and selection processes should be proportionate to the appointment in question and may vary between roles.

As a competition closes, the selection panel should inform themselves of the quality and diversity of the field and whether the competition should be extended.

The selection panel may choose not to appoint any of the candidates and re-run the competition.

In exceptional cases, a selection panel may decide to appoint a candidate without a competition. Such a decision should be approved and documented by the Chief Executive, and must be made public alongside the reasons for the decision.

Reappointments

Reappointments and extensions require the agreement of the Chief Executive. There is no automatic presumption of reappointment; each case should be considered on its own merits, taking into account a number of factors including, but not restricted to, the diversity of the current group to which the appointment relates, and the existing balance of skills and experience.

The Chief Executive may reappoint or extend the terms of appointees or volunteers subject to any such reappointment or extension being made in accordance with the law relating to the particular role, and no reappointment or extension being made without a satisfactory performance appraisal, evidence of which must be made available to the Chief Executive on request.

Length of tenure

Subject to any statutory or governance provisions relating to the role to which the appointment is being made, it is for the Chief Executive to decide on length of tenure. However there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve more than two terms* or serve in any one post for more than ten years. In exceptional

cases, the Chief Executive may decide an individual's skills and expertise is needed beyond such a tenure.

* A public appointment is for a fixed term, and the length of term will depend on the role. In the OPCC, the usual term duration is 4 years.

Monitoring compliance and improving capability

The OPCC will publish an annual report on selection processes undertaken in that year. This will examine compliance with the principles included in this code, and will include statistical information on appointments and track progress on increasing diversity within roles.

Complaints about a selection process

Complaints should be raised with the Chair of the selection panel in the first instance. The Chair of the selection panel is responsible for making applicants aware of their right to complain and for referring them to the OPCCs complaint procedures. If, after investigation by the selection panel Chair, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may appeal the outcome to the Chief Executive.

Selection panels should be encouraged to engage with the Chief Executive early in the process on exceptional cases or any potential compliance issues.

A record of complaints will be kept and monitored to identify opportunity to improve the quality of selection processes and systems.

Increasing Diversity

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner positively supports diversity and equality of opportunity and will proactively encourage good candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds to consider applying for an opportunity with the OPCC.

Strong and diverse fields of applicants bring a wealth of talent and a broad range of perspectives to the activities of Public Bodies. Diversity is about encouraging applications from candidates with the widest range of backgrounds. We recognise that there are potential barriers to appointments and we are committed to taking action to overcome these.

Through our engagement activity, we have developed effective working relationships with our diverse communities across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. We support numerous celebrations of diversity across our area, including Pride events celebrating our LGBT communities, Respect festivals that showcase our BAME, faith and cultural groups, and Blue Light Days which support people with learning disabilities. We also continue to work closely with groups across all our communities to ensure their views are considered and represented when setting the strategic direction for the police force.

Raising Awareness of opportunities

We will promote opportunities when we are out and about engaging with communities, for example as outlined above.

We will engage with relevant representative groups and networks to encourage prospective applicants from diverse backgrounds.

We will encourage applications from candidates by advertising opportunities widely, for example as well as on our website and through social and online media channels, in our newsletter and in relevant publications and journals where practicable.

We will use straight forward and simple adverts and language aimed at encouraging candidates to apply.

We will provide a dedicated resource to help potential candidates understand and prepare for the application process.

We will raise awareness of opportunities by raising the profiles of existing role models through our communications activities e.g local media, our annual report, and videos on our website.

Role profiles, specifications and adverts

In order to make role profiles, specifications and adverts clear, concise and accessible, we will ensure that:

- We use plain English and avoid jargon to appeal to the widest field of applicants;
- We promote diversity by emphasising, where possible, a candidate's ability rather than previous experience;
- Role specifications will focus on key skills and will not rule out or deter potential candidates by being too restrictive in the criteria; and
- Application forms will be simple, concise and relevant.

Diversity within the recruitment process:

In order to reinforce the need for diversity throughout the process, we will ensure that:

- Those undertaking the selection process are aware of the diversity of the existing group to which we are recruiting at the start of a campaign;
- All parties involved in the selection process are clear on the requirement to find a diverse field of candidates;
- Appointment panels will, where possible, include an independent panel member who will provide an external perspective;
- Constructive feedback will be provided to candidates
- Strong candidates who are not appointed will be encouraged to apply for other roles and opportunities where possible,

- Reappointments are the exception rather than the rule, to encourage greater diversity in new appointments.

Monitoring progress in improving diversity

We will monitor our progress by requesting the completion of anonymised diversity monitoring forms for each selection process which will enable us to analyse the diversity of the pool of applicants against the attraction and selection processes undertaken. We will publish our findings on our website and will look to improve our processes where we identify opportunity to do so.

The Selection panel

Each selection panel member must be made familiar with this framework.

Selection panel Chairs should consider the inclusion of an independent member for appointments where this would be considered beneficial in demonstrating the principles of selection and appointment detailed earlier in this document.

For competitions selecting lay members of a panel or committee, the selection panel Chair should also consider the inclusion of a representative from the panel or committee concerned.

Selection panel Chairs should also consider whether there are relationships or circumstances which are likely to affect, or could appear to affect, the judgement of any member of a selection panel and take appropriate action.

The selection panel should agree the strategy for determining merit against the selection criteria (ie agreeing the application, shortlisting and interview documentation).

The selection process should be appropriate and proportionate to the significance of the role. A variety of techniques, both less formal and more expert, may be used to assess candidates fairly against the published selection criteria for the role.

In undertaking their assessment of candidates the role of the Selection Panel is to decide, objectively, who meets the published selection criteria for the role, in other words, who is appointable to the role.

For signification appointments, the selection panel Chair should have specific responsibilities, set out in an appointment letter to highlight any material breaches of this framework that occur during the appointments process. The appointment letter must be copied to the Chief Executive. A model letter is attached to this framework.

Applicant care

Our aim is to provide a customer service to our communities that is accessible, informative, responsive and supportive.

We will engage positively with all candidates who have applied for appointments and will keep in touch with progress of competitions and inform them of key dates (shortlist and interview) ahead of time.

We will offer all candidates constructive feedback if unsuccessful following interview by phone call where this is possible.

We will encourage strong candidates who are not appointed to consider applying for other roles.

With the permission of candidates, we will retain a list of those who wish to be considered for future roles.

Where a vacancy occurs within 12 months of the conclusion of a previous appointments process, and the role and person specification for both posts are the same, we may consider appointable candidates from the reserve list from the first competition for appointment to the new vacancy.

We will aim to conclude the process within three months of a competition closing. To achieve this, the assessment and selection process will not normally start until a pool of potentially appointable candidates has been identified.

The Chair of the selection panel will identify the relevant stakeholders at the start of the process and keep them engaged, as appropriate, throughout the process.

Transparency

Transparency is an important part of appointments to public bodies, which we will factor into the design and planning of our selection systems and processes.

Publically available information on appointments processes helps to provide assurance that we have complied with best practice.

We will publish the contact details of the Chair of each selection panel, and where appropriate, the appointments that they make.

All appointments will be advertised openly.

For all competitions there will be full transparency of the selection panel, and the selection process followed. Any exceptional appointments, alongside the rationale for appointment, will also be published.

Standards in public life and handling conflicts

It is important that all appointees uphold the standards of conduct appropriate to the role being appointed to.

The selection panel must satisfy itself that all candidates for appointment can meet these standards and have no conflicts of interest that would call into question their ability to perform the role.

Candidates must be asked to declare potential conflicts of interest in their application. All potential conflicts of interest and how they might be managed must be discussed with an individual at interview. A potential conflict should not preclude a candidate from being shortlisted/appointed provided that appropriate arrangements are made. The Selection Panel Chair is responsible for seeking advice from the Chief Executive on handling any conflicts, as appropriate.

Annex 1 Model letter for Selection panel Chairs / Independent Selection Panel Member

Dear []

I am writing to thank you for agreeing to act as the Selection Panel Chair / Independent Selection Panel Member for the appointment of [] and to set out what this role entails.

The Selection Panel Chair / Independent Selection Panel Member fulfils a vital role both as a member of the selection panel and as a guarantor that the process of appointment is made in line with the principles of appointments to public bodies. (see below).

The Panel's role is to choose candidates for the appointment in question.

In undertaking their role, the Selection Panel Chair / Independent Selection Panel Member should:

- agree the assessment strategy for determining merit against the selection criteria.
- be familiar with the requirements of the role and decide objectively who meets the published selection criteria for the role, in other words, who is able to do the job and therefore is appointable to the role.

Include only for independent panel members

(As the Independent Selection Panel Member for this competition your role is to provide an independent perspective to the selection panel. For this reason, you should be independent of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner).

Principles of appointments to public bodies

Appointments must be carried out in line with the principles of appointments to public bodies (set out in the annex below). You should familiarise yourself with these Principles as part of this process. At the conclusion of every appointments process, you and the other Selection Panel members must certify that the appointment has been made in accordance with these principles.

It is your duty to highlight any material breaches of the principles of appointment to public bodies. Any concerns should be raised with the Chief Executive.

I look forward to working with you throughout this process. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely

Annex 1

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