POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER



RECRUITMENT GUIDANCE PACK

To support you in your application for the role of Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) this guidance will help you understand the process from beginning to end.

We welcome applications from ALL sections of the community who are interested in embarking on a career with South Wales Police.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity and in doing so support and provide positive action to encourage applications from members of those groups that are currently under-represented.

**What do I need to know?**

**The process**

* ***Complete application form***

This will be completed via our on line system. You will need to register for an account and complete this electronically. You can get ready by being familiar with the system and creating an account now before the application form is live – please visit our website for further information <http://www.south-wales.police.uk/en/join-us/>

At this point you will need to evidence your skill as well as providing personal information. The evidence does not have to be ‘work’ based but could be linked to something that you have undertaken outside of the working environment. What we are seeking is evidence of a particular skill; it is not important where you would have gained this skill from.

In addition to your skills, you will also be required to provide personal information such as your financial background, and details of your close relatives and associates.

We require this information to ensure we can complete the necessary vetting checks as Police Community CSOs do have access to privileged information, which may make them vulnerable to corruption. We also need to ensure that your associations are appropriate due to the nature of our business.

* ***Eligibility checks***

Your eligibility is checked on receipt of your application form. Eligibility is :

**Age -** You must be at least 18 years old to become a ~PCSO. There is no upper age limit.

**Nationality -** You must be a British Citizen, citizen from the European Economic Area (EEA), Commonwealth citizen or foreign national with no restrictions on your stay in the United Kingdom.   You must also have been continually resident in the UK for the three year period immediately before an application is made.

**Health -** You must be in good health mentally and physically to deal with the pressures and demands of police work. All applicants must pass a basic fitness test before appointment. For the endurance test you will be asked to run back and forth a 15 metre track in time with a series of bleeps, in time the bleeps become increasingly faster you must achieve level 5.4.

You will be required to undergo a medical examination to ensure you meet the health standards required. Successful applicants who receive a conditional offer of employment will be asked prior to appointment to fill in a medical questionnaire and undertake a medical examination which will also include an eyesight test and BMI check (Body Mass Index).  The healthy weight range is based on a measurement known as your body mass index (BMI). This can be determined if you know your weight and your height. The actual calculation is your weight (in kilograms) divided by your height (in metres squared). Guidance and easy to use charts on how to calculate your BMI can be found on the NHS website. The NHS advises that a BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 suggest a normal healthy weight. This means your body is not at risk of weight-related disease. The Home Office sets BMI standards. The current Home Office circular 59/2004 outlines this as between 18 and 30. Applicants who do not meet this standard may find their application delayed and / or will not be appointed.

PCSO applicants with a BMI over 32 will not be considered fit unless their body fat percentage is less than 30% for men or 36% for women. Failure to meet the medical and eyesight standards will mean you cannot be appointed. For eyesight requirements please refer to FAQs. If you have a disability, we will make adjustments where it is reasonable to do so.

When undergoing an eye test, new recruits must have at least 6/12 vision in their right or left eye, or at least 6/6 vision in both eyes. Those who wear glasses, spectacles or contact lenses must have at least 6/36 vision in both eyes without wearing their glasses, spectacles or contact lenses.

**Height Restrictions -** There are no minimum or maximum height requirements.

**Tattoos -** Candidates with visible tattoos may be eligible for appointment. Each case will be considered on its own merits, taking into account the number, nature, size, prominence, appearance and location of the tattoos. Tattoos must not be offensive to colleagues or members of the public or undermine the dignity of your role within the Force. Tattoos on the neck, face or hands are still deemed to be unacceptable but consideration may be given in some circumstances considering the size, nature and prominence of the tattoo. If candidates choose to have any additional tattoos during the recruitment process, after passing eligibility checks, the onus is on them to advise HR and provide appropriate photographs which will need to be checked.

**Financial Status -** All applicants will have their financial status checked. These checks are carried out because Police Community Support Officers have access to privileged information, which may make them vulnerable to corruption. Any applicants with outstanding County Court judgements, who have been registered bankrupt with outstanding debts, will be rejected. If you have discharged bankruptcy debts then you will need to provide a Certificate of Satisfaction with your application.

Applicants who are the subject of a current Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA) will not be considered.

**Criminal Record -** You may still be eligible to join the police service if you have minor convictions/cautions, but there are certain offences and conditions that will make you ineligible. This includes anyone who has received a formal caution in the last five years, committed a violent crime or public order offence. When making our decisions we are guided by the [National Policing Improvement Agency Circular 02/2011.](http://www.npia.police.uk/cps/rde/xchg/SID-3F5771EB-7D26EC6E/npia/root.xsl/404.htm?rdeStandardPropertyPage=yes)

**Membership of the BNP or a similar organisation -** South Wales Police has a policy of prohibiting any of our officers or staff from being members of the BNP, or a similar organisation whose aims, objectives or pronouncements may contradict the duty to promote race equality. . If you are, or have previously been a member of the BNP or a similar organisation, your application may be rejected. Any relatives and associates with criminal convictions or cautions may also hinder you being accepted into the Service.

* ***Scoring your evidence on application form (shortlist)***

Your evidence will be assessed if you are successful at the eligibility stage. Please ensure when completing your form you answer the questions with examples and have a clear understanding of the question(s). On the application form you are restricted to 310 characters for each question, so you need to be concise with your answers. There is no spell-check on the application form so you could practice your answers onto Word and copy and paste them onto the application form. This way you will be able to word count, and spell-check your answers.

The role has 6 competencies (skills/behaviour required). Within the application form, you are only required to evidence against 3 of the 6 competencies. These are:

**Professionalism**

* Acts with integrity, in line with values of the Police Service
* Takes ownership for resolving problems, demonstrating courage and resilience in dealing with difficult and potentially volatile situations
* Acts on own initiative to address issues, showing a strong work ethic and putting in extra effort when required.
* Upholds professional standards, acting honestly and ethically and challenges unprofessional conduct or discriminatory behaviour
* Remains calm and professional under pressure, defusing conflict and being prepared to step forward and take control when required.

**Working with others**

* Works co-operatively with others to get things done, willingly giving help and support to colleagues.
* Is approachable, developing positive working relationships.
* Listens carefully and asks questions to clarify understanding, expressing own views positively and constructively.
* Persuades people by stressing the benefits of a particular approach, keeps them informed of progress and manages their expectations.
* Is courteous, polite and considerate, showing empathy and compassion.
* Deals with people as individuals and address their specific needs and concerns
* Treats people with respect and dignity, dealing with them fairly and without prejudice taking a non judgemental approach regardless of their background or circumstances

**Decision Making**

* Gathers, verifies and assesses all appropriate and available information to gain an accurate understanding of situations.
* Considers a range of possible options before making clear, timely, justifiable decisions
* Reviews decisions in light of new information and changing circumstances.
* Balance risks, costs and benefits, thinking about the wider impact of decisions
* Exercises discretion and applies professional judgement, ensuring actions and decisions are proportionate and in the public interest

**The questions are:**

Q1 Professionalism – Please describe a specific occasion when you have intervened to take control of a situation.

Why was it necessary to intervene in the situation?

What did you do to take control of the situation?

What did you consider when intervening in the situation?

What was particularly good or effective about how you intervened to take control of the situation?

What difficulties did you experience and how did you overcome them?

Please do not use statements like ‘I helped someone and they were happy with the outcome’. You will need to provide in the example what you did.

Q2 Working with Others - Please describe a specific occasion when you have encouraged a person to view an issue more positively?

Why was it necessary to encourage the person to view the issue more positively?

How did you encourage the person to view the issue more positively?

What did you consider when encouraging the person to view the issue more positively?

What was particularly good or effective about how you encouraged the person to view the issue more positively?

What difficulties did you experience and how did you overcome them?

Please do not use statements like ‘I encouraged this and they were able to change their approach. You will need to provide in the example how you were able to deal with the situation and what you did.

Q3 Decision making - Please describe a specific occasion when you have considered a number of options before making a decision?

Why was it necessary to consider a number of options before making the decision?

What did you consider when identifying the options?

What did you consider when making the decision?

What was particularly good or effective about how you identified the options and made the decision?

What difficulties did you experience and how did you overcome them?

Please do not use statements like ‘I made a decision to… and the outcome was…..’. You will need to provide in the example what you did, why you made this decision, what was involved in your decision making

You will also need to consider the full descriptors of each of the competencies you are evidencing against, and where possible, include your evidence of this behaviour in your example.

Q4 Tell us why you want to be a PCSO. Including what skills, experience and abilities you have that make you suitable.

We want to know why you want to become a Police Community Support Officer, including what experience, skills and abilities you feel you have that will make you suitable.

Where possible, please refer to the all of the 6 competencies of the role, to include in your answer, and also remember to evidence any examples you choose to use, don’t just make a statement. You will need to say I believe I have the skill of ….., and this is evidenced in an example of when I did ……..

The competencies are:

* Serving the public
* Professionalism
* Openness to Change
* Service Delivery
* Decision Making
* Working with Others

Q5 On a day to day basis, what tasks do you expect to be carrying out as a PCSO?

We need to see that you know what the role involves and that you have considered whether it is the job for you. Tell us what tasks you expect to carry out if appointed.

You will need to ensure that you have a full understanding of the role of the PCSO. This guidance will help, and further information can be found on the role profile and South Wales Police website, recruitment pages.

**Tips for completing a CBQ – Competency Based Qustionnaire.**

Remember, the purpose of the questions is for you to demonstrate your skills, traits and methods of working. The examples you choose to give should be such that enable you to do this in a clear and concise manner. These do not have to be work based, and may be as a result of something that you have completed as part of your personal life or a hobby. What we are seeking is evidence that you are able to meet the skills and competencies required for the role.

When preparing your evidence, please read the Role Profile carefully, highlight any areas which are not completely clear to you, so that we can support you in the completion of your application form if necessary.

The key to Competency Based applications is that general answers are not enough. You will need to provide detailed and specific information about an event or experience and how you acted in the circumstances. Whichever example you choose to use, you must focus on you and your personal role. If you provide an example where you worked as a member of a team, make sure you focus on the part you played and make “I” statements rather than “we”

What we are seeking is evidence that you are able to meet the skills and competencies required for the role. Avoid using jargon or slang terms. Remember that this is a formal application for an important and responsible job.

You can use examples from your work, social, domestic or educational life. It is important that the form is all your own work. At any point you may be questioned on any example given, and asked to provide contact details of people able to confirm what happened.

Try to use examples that you found difficult or challenging to deal with. They tend to achieve better marks.

Write in complete sentences, rather than notes or bullet points.

* ***Assessment Centre***

The Assessment Centre will consist of:

* **1. Interview**

The interview will last for a maximum of 20 minutes during which you will be asked four questions about how you have dealt with specific situations in the past. These questions will be related to the below competency areas:

Serving the Public

* Demonstrates a real belief in public service, focusing on what matters to the public and what will best serve their interests
* Understands the expectations, changing needs and concerns of different communities and strive to address them
* Builds public confidence by talking to people in local communities to explore their viewpoints and break down barriers between them and the police
* Understands the impact and benefits of policing for different communities and identifies the best way to deliver services to them
* Works in partnership with other agencies to deliver the best possible overall service to the public

Professionalism

* Acts with integrity, in line with values of the Police Service
* Takes ownership for resolving problems, demonstrating courage and resilience in dealing with difficult and potentially volatile situations
* Acts on own initiative to address issues, showing a strong work ethic and putting in extra effort when required
* Upholds professional standards, acting honestly and ethically and challenges unprofessional conduct or discriminatory behaviour
* Remains calm and professional under pressure, defusing conflict and being prepared to step forward and take control when required

Openness to Change

* Positive about change, responding flexibly and adapting to different ways of working
* Finds better, more cost effective ways to do things, making suggestions for change
* Takes an innovative and creative approach to solving problems
* Asks for and acts on feedback, learning from experience and developing own professional skills and knowledge

Service Delivery

* Understands the organisation’s objectives and priorities and how work fits into these
* Plans and organises tasks effectively, taking a structured and methodical approach to achieving outcomes
* Manages multiple tasks effectively by thinking things through in advance, prioritising and managing time well
* Focuses on the outcomes to be achieved, working quickly and accurately and seeking guidance when appropriate

Decision Making

* Gathers, verifies and assesses all appropriate and available information to gain an accurate understanding of situations
* Considers a range of possible options before making clear, timely, justifiable decisions
* Reviews decisions in light of new information and changing circumstances
* Balance risks, costs and benefits, thinking about the wider impact of decisions
* Exercises discretion and applies professional judgement, ensuring actions and decisions are proportionate and in the public interest

Working with Others

* Works co-operatively with others to get things done, willingly giving help and support to colleagues
* Is approachable, developing positive working relationships
* Listens carefully and asks questions to clarify understanding, expressing own views positively and constructively
* Persuades people by stressing the benefits of a particular approach, keeps them informed of progress and manages their expectations
* Is courteous, polite and considerate, showing empathy and compassion
* Deals with people as individuals and address their specific needs and concerns
* Treats people with respect and dignity, dealing with them fairly and without prejudice taking a non-judgemental approach regardless of their background or circumstances

You may also be asked about the work and ethics of South Wales Police. You will be allowed up to five minutes to answer each question, and the timing will be monitored by the interviewer, who will stop you if you overrun the five minutes. The interviewer may ask you further follow on questions to assist you to provide a full response. When considering your responses to the interview questions please be mindful to only choose examples that you feel comfortable discussing with the interviewer.

**Priorities and the work ethics of South Wales Police** – Please familiarise yourself with these by researching information from the website [www.south-wales.police.uk](http://www.south-wales.police.uk/)

* **2. Police Initial Recruitment Test (PIR) – Numerical and Verbal Logical Reasoning tests**

In the numerical reasoning test, you will be asked to answer 25 multiple choice questions which will measure your ability to solve numerical problems accurately. You will have 12 minutes to complete the test.

In the verbal logical reasoning test, you must answer 31 multiple choice questions in 25 minutes, which will measure your ability to reason logically when given facts about events.

Here are some example questions for you to practise:

**Numeracy assessment test**

**Question 1**. A purse was found with one £5 note, four 20p coins, and five 2p coins. How much did the purse contain altogether?

* £5.10
* £5.22
* £5.82
* £5.85
* £5.90

**Question 2.** A car park has space for 220 cars per floor. How many can fit on 3 floors?

* 440
* 460
* 640
* 660
* 680

**Question 3.** A work shift begins at 14:15 and lasts for six hours. What time does it end?

* 20:15
* 16:15
* 20:45
* 22:30
* 19:45

**Question 4.** If there is an average of 30 accidents per month, how many would you expect there to be in 12 months

* 420
* 380
* 360
* 300
* 120

**Question 5.** What percentage of £40 is £8?

* 5%
* 20%
* 22%
* 25%
* 48%

**Verbal reasoning test**

**Scenario**

Sometime of the night of October 1st, the Copacabana Club was burnt to the ground. The police are treating the fire as suspicious. The only facts known at this stage are:-

* The club was insured for more than its real value.
* The club belonged to John Hodges.
* Les Braithwaite was known to dislike John Hodges.
* Between October 1st and October 2nd, Les Braithwaite was away from home on a business trip.
* There were no fatalities.
* A plan of the club was found in Les Braithwaite's flat.

**Question 1.** A member of John Hodges' family died in the blaze.

* True
* False
* Impossible to say

**Question 2.** If the insurance company pay out in full, John Hodges stands to profit from the fire.

* True
* False
* Impossible to say

**Question 3.** The flat where the plan was found is close to the club.

* True
* False
* Impossible to say

**Question 4.** John Hodges could have been at the club when the fire took place.

* True
* False
* Impossible to say

**Question 5.** There are definite grounds to arrest John Hodges for arson.

* True
* False
* Impossible to say
* ***Fitness test***

You will need to be in fairly good condition to pass the police community support officer fitness test. Because you must be able to run for a reasonable distance, as part of your assessment, you will be tested to ensure your fitness levels are high enough. It's a thorough test, but don't worry, it's not about being super fit. We only want to make sure you would be physically able to carry out your duties. You will be asked to run to and fro along a 15 metre track in time with a series of bleeps, which become increasingly faster up to level 5/4.

You will have 3 attempts, should you not be able to meet the required standard, after the 3rd attempt, you will be withdrawn from the process. Your third attempt is classed as a pre-appointment fitness test and will take place approximately 6 weeks prior to the anticipated appointment date and you must pass this to progress your application.

* ***Security and Financial checks***

Our Vetting Unit must carry out a background checks using information you provided on your application against you and your family using Police systems. These will include any convictions/cautions and financial vetting.

* ***References***

We will ask for a checkable history for the previous 3 years, we will not write to your current employer unless we have your permission to do so.

* ***Medical assessment (including eye test)***

You need to be in good health to be accepted as a PCSO. Because PCSO’s need to be physically healthy in order to carry out their duties, you will need to be examined to ensure you have no serious health problems. Once you have passed all the other parts of the recruitment process and we are ready to offer you a conditional offer of appointment you will be given appointment times for an eyesight test and a medical examination, this will include a BMI check (Body Mass Index). Please refer to ‘eligibility section’ above for further information.

* ***Drugs test***

You will be asked to undertake a drugs test and provide information about any medication you may be taking.

* ***Biometric Vetting (Fingerprints and DNA***

You will be required to give a Fingerprint and DNA sample. On the day we will be asking you to sign a consent form to take your fingerprints and a sample of your DNA for the purposes of a speculative search and for your fingerprints and DNA profile to be retained on the Police Elimination Database (PEDb). The purpose of obtaining fingerprints and DNA samples is to allow for a speculative search to be made against the local and national databases prior to your appointment to the police force. This is to ensure that you have not previously come to adverse police attention, which you have not informed us of, and also that you are not linked to any outstanding crime scenes.

We will ask you to take these tests after we have we have successfully completed all your background checks.

**What happens next?**

**The advert will be available from 09:00 on Monday 26th August 2019 and will close at 12:00 on Tuesday 3rd September 2019.**

**Support**

The Force has a number of associations to support applicants. We want our workforce to reflect the diverse range of communities we serve, and are committed to supporting applicants through our recruitment processes whatever your lifestyle or background.

As an equal opportunities employer, we welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons. However, as black and minority ethnic (BME) candidates are currently under-represented within the Force, we would particularly welcome applications from BME applicants.  If you would like to discuss further the opportunities, support offered and the forthcoming recruitment campaign, please contact our Representative Workforce Team on [Joinus@south-wales.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Joinus@south-wales.pnn.police.uk).

Details of our other support networks are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ability Support Network (ASN)** | Julia Tyler  01656 655555 Ext. 31-877  Tony Parker  01656 655555 Ext. 34-834 |
| **Black Police Association (BPA)** | Chair - Bharat Narbad  01656 303502 |
| **Christian Police Association (CPA)** | [www.cpauk.net](http://www.cpauk.net) |
| **Female Police Association (FPA)** | Chair - Lisa Gore  01656 655555 Ext 27204 |
| **LGBT Network** | [LGBT@south-wales.pnn.police.uk](mailto:LGBT@south-wales.pnn.police.uk) |

**Further questions?**

1. **Who do I contact to discuss how I apply?**

You can contact our team in HR-Recruitment ([HR-Recruitment@south-wales.pnn.police.uk](mailto:HR-Recruitment@south-wales.pnn.police.uk)) and they will direct your query to the most appropriate person.

1. **Who do contact if I experience difficulties with the application form?**

You can contact our HR Helpdesk on 01656 305870 or [HR.Helpdesk@south-wales.pnn.police.uk](mailto:HR.Helpdesk@south-wales.pnn.police.uk)