

# WHO ARE INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY OBSERVERS?

**Independent Community Observers are volunteers from the community who play an important part in helping to monitor key aspects of the PSNI recruitment process and report on this to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. They focus on observing that the same procedures are applied to all candidates and that facilities and arrangements are adequate.**

## WHAT DO ICOs DO?

To date Independent Community Observers have visited 11 PSNI recruitment campaigns attending aspects of the initial selection tests and assessment centres for potential recruits. They have also visited the recruitment processes for civilian support staff where the recruitment is being taken forward on a 50:50 basis.

## DO ICOs WORK ALONE?

Community Observers will not be expected to work alone. There is a team of observers who meet to agree their visits in line with guidance from the Policing Board. In carrying out their visits volunteers work in teams of two so they can provide mutual support.



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Northern Ireland Policing Board  
Waterside Tower  
31 Clarendon Road  
Clarendon Dock  
BELFAST BT1 3BG

Tel: 028 9040 8500

Fax: 028 9040 8540

Text Phone: 028 9052 7668

Email: [information@nipolicingboard.org.uk](mailto:information@nipolicingboard.org.uk)

### DOCUMENT TITLE

**INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY OBSERVER LEAFLET**

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This document is also available upon request in alternative formats including CD and large print. It can also be made available in minority languages or on audiocassette. Requests for alternative formats should be made to the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

### ONLINE FORMAT

This document is available in PDF format from our website.

### DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document, neither the Northern Ireland Policing Board nor its consultants will be held liable for any inaccuracies that may be contained within.

### Design

[www.whitenoisestudios.com](http://www.whitenoisestudios.com)

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a human eye, looking directly at the viewer. The image is rendered in a monochromatic blue and white color scheme, with the eye's iris and pupil being the central focus. The surrounding facial features are blurred and less distinct.

the NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD  
**INDEPENDENT  
COMMUNITY  
OBSERVERS**

## WHERE AND WHEN DO VISITS TAKE PLACE?

Most of the visits take place in Northern Ireland generally at hotels although a small number of visits are carried out in Ireland or Great Britain. Tests to be observed take place in the morning, afternoon and evening. Volunteers usually observe for a 2 hour session and may observe several sessions within each recruitment campaign. The times for making visits will be flexible but volunteers are usually expected to commit 20 hours annually to this role.

## DO COMMUNITY OBSERVERS REPORT ON THEIR FINDINGS?

Community Observers report to the Policing Board on aspects of their visit. The Policing Board monitors these reports and takes forward any issues arising from them in order to improve the recruitment processes.

## WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU NEED TO BE AN ICO?

The observers are based throughout Northern Ireland but a large amount of the observations occur in the greater Belfast area. Independent Community Observers must demonstrate that they have:

- Effective communication skills, both oral and written
- Discretion and impartiality
- The ability to work as part of a team
- The ability to make sound judgements
- Previous experience of equality and recruitment processes would be desirable

## ARE COMMUNITY OBSERVERS TRAINED?

Community Observers are provided with a one day training course to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively carry out their visits and report back. They also get a handbook containing useful guidance, regular refresher training and guidance and support is always available through the Scheme Administrator at the Policing Board.

## CAN ANYONE BE AN INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY OBSERVER?

Independent Community Observers come from a wide range of backgrounds however, they must be over 18 years of age and cannot be serving or former police officers, police support staff or staff or members of the Policing Board.

Anyone applying to become a Community Observer will also be asked to comply with a police security check.

## DO COMMUNITY OBSERVERS GET PAID?

Community Observers are volunteers so they don't get paid or compensated for loss of earnings, however, travel and reasonable out of pocket expenses are paid. (If Community Observers use their own car to make visits they must have fully comprehensive/business use car insurance and they are responsible for incurring the cost of amending their car insurance to cover for business purposes.)

## INTERESTED?

We are currently appointing a new team of Independent Community Observers.

If you would like to apply to be a Community Observer please contact:

The Scheme Administrator  
Northern Ireland Policing Board  
Waterside Tower  
31 Clarendon Road  
Clarendon Dock  
Belfast BT1 3BG  
Tel: 028 9040 8526 028 9040 8563  
Text Phone: 028 9052 7668  
Email: [information@nipolicingboard.org.uk](mailto:information@nipolicingboard.org.uk)

Those applying will be interviewed based on applicants demonstrating on the application form that they possess the key qualities and requirements. Those appointed will be appointed for a 3 year period following completion of a six month probationary period.

*This role offers a challenging opportunity to help monitor and report on PSNI recruitment processes. If you feel you possess the necessary qualities and are interested in being an Independent Community Observer please complete and return the application form to the address above by Friday 10th November 2006.*