

INSPIRE
ADEQUATE FACILITIES
MONITORING
OVERSIGHT
PSNI RECRUITMENT PROCESS
IMPARTIAL VOLUNTEERS
TRANSPARENT
ADEQUATE FACILITIES **FAIR**
INDEPENDENT OBSERVING
OVERSIGHT INDEPENDENT
IMPARTIAL REPORTING
ADEQUATE FACILITIES

**THE INDEPENDENT
COMMUNITY OBSERVER (ICO)**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2021 / 22 FOR THE
PSNI RECRUITMENT
CAMPAIGN**



BACKGROUND

In September 1999 the report of the Independent Commission on Policing, (known as the Patten Report) recommended that police recruitment should be contracted out to an independent agency and that there should be community oversight of the process.

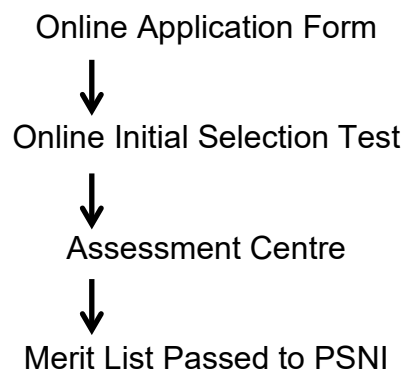
Subsequently, the Board established a team of volunteers from all sections of the community known as Independent Community Observers (ICOs). Their role is to observe, and report to the Board on the PSNI recruitment processes in line with Section 10 of the Police (Recruitment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2001.

CONTEXT

While this report covers the period 2021/22, this report will consider the PSNI recruitment campaign which was launched in 2021 with Assessment Centres taking place from January-April 2022. In this campaign the ICOs were solely involved at the Assessment Centre stage. This stage involves ICOs observing a sample of the recruitment process for the post of PSNI Police Constable and reporting back to the Board on:

- The adequacy of facilities and arrangements; and
- Whether, as far as practicable, the same procedures were applied to all candidates.

THE RECRUITMENT STAGES¹



¹ The current stages for PSNI recruitment (as managed by the Independent Recruitment Agent, Deloitte)

DETAIL

An ICO recruitment campaign was launched in March 2021 as the previous ICOs had reached the end of their tenures. With the successful appointment of 10 ICOs, Board Officials provided induction training in January 2022 just before PSNI Assessment Centres took place between January and April 2022.

The most recent PSNI recruitment campaign was advertised in November 2021, with most of the assessments taking place in a Belfast Hotel, except for four contingency sessions which were held in Deloitte's offices. The Deloitte offices were used to accommodate contingency assessments and cancellations, primarily due to candidates isolating due to Covid. The PSNI approved the use of Deloitte's offices for the final assessments. Due to limited space in the Deloitte premises the ICOs were unable to attend the role play sessions, however, a pre-inspection of the facilities was carried out by an ICO to ensure they were appropriate. The ICOs rated Deloitte's facilities as 'Good'.

Due to Covid restrictions, limited numbers were allowed into the Assessment Centres and therefore ICOs visited individually as opposed to being in pairs, which would be the usual practice. This was agreed in line with guidance from Deloitte prior to Assessment Centres opening and replicated arrangements made the previous year during the pandemic. Guidance around the process and the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was issued to all ICOs prior to commencing in the role.

ICOs attended the Assessment Centres from 28 January 2022 through to 11 April 2022, which included the observation of Sergeants' Briefings and Role Plays. The final assessment day was held in Deloitte offices on 26 April 2022.

The ICOs made a total of 53 visits to the Assessment Centres and during this time they observed 175 role plays and 48 sergeants' briefings. Within these visits the ICOs observed and commented on whether:

- Candidates were given equal amounts of time for each process;
- The same procedures were applied to all candidates;

- Instructions to candidates were clear, whether spoken or written;
- The appropriate number of assessors/role players etc were with the candidates;
- Candidates were treated with respect / courtesy / sensitivity / confidentiality and professionalism;
- Candidates were given prompt responses to any questions they had;
- The size of the rooms / temperature / lighting etc were acceptable;
- There were no distractions for candidates such as excessive noise;
- Background briefings were provided as necessary; and
- Sessions lasted the specified length.

From these, 96% (51) of the visits found that the same procedures were being applied to all the assessments, however for 2% (1) of the visits no rating was given. Similarly, 98% (52) of the visits rated the facilities as good and 2% (1) rated them as acceptable.

It should also be noted that ICOs were not able to attend the four contingency sessions due to restrictions of numbers within Deloitte's offices. However, after an ICO pre-inspection deemed the facilities to be 'good', the Board is satisfied that this will not have an impact on the overall findings of the report for this 2021/22 PSNI Recruitment Campaign.

A further statistical breakdown of the reports received during the 2021/22 campaign are outlined below and published at www.nipolicingboard.org.uk

TABLE 1: Duration of the Observation

Duration	Total	%
< 60 mins	3	6%
60-89 mins	14	26%
90-119 mins	14	26%
> 120 mins	21	40%
Unrecorded	1	2%
TOTAL	53	100%

TABLE 2: Type of Test Centre Observation

Type of Test				
Sergeants' Briefing	Role Play 1	Role Play 2	Role Play 3	TOTAL
48	88	61	26	223

TABLE 3: Observer Rating of Procedures

Procedures	Total	%
Same procedures applied across all assessments	51	96%
Same procedures not applied across all assessments	1	2%
No rating given	1	2%
TOTAL	53	100%

TABLE 4: Observer Rating of Facilities

Facilities	Total	%
Good	52	98%
Acceptable	1	2%
TOTAL	53	100%



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Annual Report 2021/22 for the PSNI Recruitment
Campaign

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