

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

**NORTHERN IRELAND  
POLICING BOARD'S  
INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY  
OBSERVER SCHEME**

**REPORT ON 2020/21  
PSNI RECRUITMENT  
CAMPAIGN**



**APRIL 2021**

## 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.

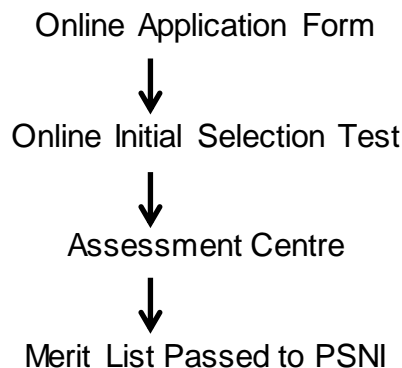
Subsequently, the Board established a team of volunteers from all sections of the community known as Independent Community Observers (ICOs). Their role is to observe, and report to the Board on the PSNI recruitment processes in line with Section 10 of the Police (Recruitment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations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

## CONTEXT

While this report covers the period 2020/21 this is the PSNI recruitment campaign 2020. 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 STAGES<sup>1</sup>



---

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

## **DETAIL**

The most recent PSNI recruitment campaign was advertised in February 2020 and during this campaign there were two Assessment Centre venues. One was situated within a Belfast hotel and the other in the Deloitte offices in Belfast. The Deloitte offices were used when the hotel had to close due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Due to limited numbers being allowed into the Assessment Centres, ICOs visited individually as opposed to being in pairs, and this was agreed in line with guidance from Deloitte prior to Assessment Centres opening. Guidance around the process and the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was issued to all ICOs prior to commencing in the role.

ICOs commenced their role from 22 July 2020 through to 16 October 2020 which included the observation of Sergeants' Briefings and Role Plays. The process was postponed from 19 October 2020 due to COVID-19, however recommenced on 17 November 2020 in the Deloitte offices in Belfast. From 27 November 2020 to 18 December 2020, when the process was completed, both the Belfast hotel and the Deloitte offices were used. ICOs were unable to oversee role plays when in the Deloitte offices due to limited space and social distancing rules.

A total of 63 visits were made by ICOs, to the Assessment Centres and during this time they observed a total of 119 role plays and 59 sergeants' briefings. Within these visits the ICOs observed and commented on whether:

- Candidates are given equal amounts of time for each process;
- The same procedures are applied to all candidates;
- Instructions to candidates are clear, whether spoken or written;
- The appropriate number of assessors/role players etc were with the candidates;
- Candidates are 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 was acceptable;
- There were no distractions for candidates such as excessive noise;

- Background briefing was provided as necessary; and
- Sessions lasted the specified length.

From these 92% (58) of the visits found that the same procedures were being applied to all of the assessments (for 3% (2) of the visits no rating was given) with 95% (60) rating the facilities as good and 2% (1) rating them as acceptable. On one occasion the ICO did not make comment on the facilities and on another occasion no candidates attended for the session and therefore, no rating was given. The acceptable rating for the facilities was not in relation to the Belfast hotel, but to the Deloitte offices.

It should also be noted that 30 candidates could not attend the Assessment Centre at the allocated time due to COVID-19. Due to these circumstances a small number of mop-up sessions (maximum 3 sessions) will be organised to accommodate these candidates. While ICOs will have the opportunity to attend these sessions, which will be held in Deloitte's offices, these visits have not been included in this report. The Board is satisfied that this will not have an impact on the overall findings of the report for this 2020/21 PSNI Recruitment Campaign.

A further statistical breakdown of the reports received during the 2020/21 campaign are outlined below and published at [www.nipolicingboard.org.uk](http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk).

**TABLE 1: Location of the Test Centre**

Location	Total Visits	%
Belfast hotel	51	81%
Deloitte Offices, Belfast	12	19%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 2: Duration of the Observation**

Duration	Total	%
< 60 mins	14	22%
60-89 mins	14	22%
90-119 mins	18	29%
> 120 mins	9	14%
Unrecorded	8	13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 3: Type of Test Centre Observation**

Type of Test				
Sergeants' Briefing	Role Play 1	Role Play 2	Role Play 3	<b>TOTAL</b>
59	62	50	7	<b>178</b>

**TABLE 4: Observer Rating of Procedures**

Procedures	Total	%
Same procedures applied across all assessments	58	92%
Same procedures not applied across all assessments	3	5%
No rating given	2	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 5: Observer Rating of Facilities**

<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Good	60	95%
Acceptable	1	2%
No rating given	2	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>



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

### Northern Ireland Policing Board

Waterside Tower  
31 Clarendon Road  
Clarendon Dock  
Belfast BT1 3BG



028 9040 8500



information@nipolicingboard.org.uk



www.nipolicingboard.org.uk



policingboard



@nipolicingboard



nipolicingboard



Northernirelandpolicingboard

### DOCUMENT TITLE

Northern Ireland Policing Board's  
Independent Community Observer Scheme  
Report on 2020/21 PSNI Recruitment Campaign

### ONLINE FORMAT

This document is available in PDF format from our website.

### PUBLISHED APRIL 2021

This document may also be made available upon request in alternative formats or languages. Requests should be made to the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

### DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document, the Northern Ireland Policing Board will not be held liable for any inaccuracies that may be contained within.