

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 Recruitment Process

First step will be an on-line application process which entails several on-line tests and an application form. All tests must be successfully completed before you can complete the application form.

Eligibility

The first part of the online application process will ask a series of questions to determine if you are eligible to apply.

- **Citizenship/Residency** - 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.
- **Age** - You must be at least 18 years old to become a PCSO. There is no upper age limit.
- **Political Affiliation** - 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.
- **Cautions & Convictions** - 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 03/2012 National Policing Improvement Agency Eligibility criteria for the role of police constable 2019 .

- **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.
- **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.
- **Qualifications** - To join the Force in this role you will need to have a level 2 or above qualification in Maths & English (Grade A - C). Please note that you will be required to upload evidence of your level 2 English and Maths certificate at the same time as you submit your application. If you are not in possession of a valid certificate, you must obtain one prior to commencing the application process. If you do not have a level 2 qualification or do not have a copy of your certificate you will be required to sit an “on-line test” which will test your academic ability to work at Level 2. If you pass the “on-line test” then you will be able to proceed with the application process.

Online Tests

Candidates who pass the eligibility checks will then be invited to complete the online recruitment tests. These consist of:

- **Behavioural Styles Questionnaire (BSQ)** - The Police Behavioural Styles Questionnaire measures your typical behaviour and preferences at work. The purpose of the questionnaire is to assess whether you have the right behaviours and attitudes to be effective in the role. This questionnaire invites you to review a number of statements and indicate which statements you completely agree with or completely disagree with on a sliding scale.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

In the questionnaire, you will be presented with these statements about your typical behaviour at work in blocks of four. You will need to read each statement carefully and then decide the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the rating scale below.

- * Completely Disagree
- * Strongly Disagree
- * Somewhat Disagree
- * Neither Agree nor Disagree
- * Somewhat Agree
- * Strongly Agree
- * Completely Agree

Depending on your responses, you may also be asked to rank particular statements in terms of how well they describe your typical behaviour at work. There is no time limit, but it should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The test does not require any specialist knowledge to complete.

- **Situational Judgement Test (SJT)** - The Police Situational Judgment Test assesses your judgement and decision-making skills in relation to job-relevant situations. In the test you will be presented with a series of scenarios which reflect challenging situations that you may face when working in a PCSO role. For each scenario, you will be presented with four possible actions that could be taken. You will be asked to rate each of the four actions in terms of its effectiveness in addressing the scenario. The scale you are required to rate the actions on is shown below.
 - * **Counterproductive** - An inappropriate action that will have a negative impact or make the situation worse.
 - * **Ineffective** - A poor action which will not help the situation.
 - * **Slightly Effective** - An action that would have a small positive impact on the situation.
 - * **Effective** - An action that would have a reasonable positive impact on the situation.
 - * **Very Effective** - One of the best actions that could be taken in response to the situation.

The test does not require any specialist knowledge to complete. Your responses should be based solely on the information presented in each scenario.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

If you successfully complete the online tests you will be invited to attend an interview.

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

If successful at the interview stage we will then start pre-employment checks.

Pre-Employment Checks

- **Vetting** - You will complete forms relating to security vetting information and clearance and checks will be completed by our Vetting Department. Our Vetting Unit must carry out 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.
- **Fitness Test** - You will need to be in fairly good condition to pass the PCSO 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.
- **Biometric Vetting** - 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.

- **Drugs Test** - You will be asked to undertake a drugs test and provide information about any medication you may be taking. This will involve providing hair samples for testing.
- **Medical Assessment** - 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). 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.

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.

- **Employment References** - References are required to cover a minimum of 3 years continuous employment history. If you have not been in employment for 3 years we will look in addition to obtain education and personal references. We will not write to your current employer unless we have your permission to do so.

Uniform Fitting & ID Card

If you successfully complete all the pre-appointment checks you will then be invited to attend uniform fitting and ID card appointments.