

# Guidance notes for the completion of this application form

If your application form is successful, further information regarding your past employment and education, references and family will be sought.

Your application will tell us what we need to know to determine whether you go through to the next stage of our selection process. You should read these notes carefully before you complete the form. You may find it helpful to do a rough draft first – particularly with section 4 (Competency Assessment).

You might also find it helpful to retain a copy of your completed application to refer to later.

## Note 1 Personal details

Applicants for the Police Service must undergo thorough screening. Please list all surnames by which you have been known, including your name at birth. There is no minimum age to become a Police

Community Support Officer but you must be able to demonstrate all the competencies that are required of a PCSO throughout the assessment process.

## Note 2 Force you wish to apply to

Please state which force you wish to apply to. Please note that applications will not be accepted from people who have previously

applied unsuccessfully to any police force in England and Wales in the last six months.

## Note 3 Nationality

To be eligible for appointment, you must be a British citizen or a citizen of a member state of the European Community or other states in the European Economic Area (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein). Commonwealth citizens and foreign nationals are also eligible but only if they are resident in the UK free of restrictions. **Irrespective of nationality, applicants must have been resident in the UK for three years prior to submitting an application.**

If you are a Commonwealth citizen or a foreign national, you must provide proof that you have no restrictions on your stay in the UK. You should therefore send a **copy** of your passport which shows that your stay is free of restrictions. **Do not** send the actual passport with this application. Other documentary evidence of your status may be required. **Note:** all candidates will be required to produce their passports when attending our Assessment Centre.

## Note 4 Convictions and cautions: you and your family

Convictions or cautions will not necessarily preclude you from appointment. It will depend on their nature and the circumstances of the offence. Failure to disclose convictions or cautions will, however, result in your application being terminated.

You must declare all convictions for any past offences, formal cautions by the police (including cautions as a juvenile, i.e. under 18 years) and any bind-overs imposed by any court. You should include traffic convictions such as speeding, drink-drive offences, fixed penalties for motoring or disorder offences and any appearances before a court martial.

You must declare any charge or summons currently outstanding against you.

You must include spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (by virtue of the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975) or any involvement with civil, military or transport police.

You must declare if you have ever been involved in any criminal investigation, whether or not this led to prosecution (either of yourself or others).

Some applicants do not declare information which they believe is no longer held on record. However, our enquiries will reveal incidents from long ago and failure to disclose these will lead to your application being rejected. If you have any doubts, include the details and let us decide if they are relevant.

You can access our policy on criminal convictions at [www.policecouldyou.co.uk](http://www.policecouldyou.co.uk).

We will also want to know whether any of your close family or associates are involved in criminal activity and we will therefore search for any criminal convictions or cautions recorded against your family. **You must advise them that these enquiries will be made.** The Police Service cannot disclose the results of these enquiries to you.

## Note 5 Tattoos

Tattoos are not a bar to appointment. However, some tattoos could potentially offend members of the public or colleagues, or could bring discredit to the Police Service. It depends on their size, nature and location, and sometimes on the extent.

If you have tattoos on your face, neck, forearms or hands, you should describe their nature, words used, extent, size and location.

Tattoos are not acceptable if they:

- undermine the dignity and authority of the Police Community Support Officers;
- could cause offence to members of the public or colleagues and/or invite provocation;

- are garish or numerous or particularly prominent;
- indicate unacceptable attitudes towards women, minority groups or any other section of the community;
- indicate alignment with a particular group which could give offence to members of the public or colleagues;
- are considered to be rude, lewd, crude, racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic, violent or intimidating.

## Note 6 Membership of the British National Party or similar

The Police Service has a policy prohibiting any of their officers or staff from becoming members of the BNP or similar organisations whose aims, objectives or pronouncements may contradict the duty to promote race equality.

If you are, or have been, a member of the BNP or similar your application will be rejected.

## Note 7 Health, eyesight and disability

Applicants must be in good health, of sound constitution and able both physically and mentally to perform the duties of a PCSO once appointed.

PCSOs are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. If you have a disability, we will make adjustments where it is reasonable to do so. Please provide any relevant information about your disability and details of any reasonable adjustment you think you may need to undertake the assessment process and role of a PCSO.

Disability is defined as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Successful applicants will fill in a medical questionnaire and undertake a medical examination prior to appointment.

All applicants will have their eyesight examined at the medical assessment stage. Failure to meet the standards means you cannot be appointed.

You should note the following:

### Colour vision

The use of colour-correcting lenses is not acceptable.

Severe colour deficiencies (monochromacy) are not acceptable. Mild anomalous trichromacy is acceptable. Severe anomalous dichromacy or trichromacy is also acceptable but you will need to be aware of the deficiency and make appropriate adjustments.

### Eye surgery

Radical keratotomy, arcuate keratotomy or corneal grafts are not acceptable. Other forms of refractive surgery such as LASIK, LASEK, PRK, ICRS or epiflap are all acceptable provided that six weeks have elapsed since surgery, there are no residual side effects and other eyesight standards are met.

You may be asked to provide a report from an optician. This can be found at [www.policecouldyou.co.uk](http://www.policecouldyou.co.uk) under eyesight standards.

## Note 8 Financial position

Members of the Police Service are in a privileged position with regard to access to information and could be considered potentially vulnerable to corruption. Applicants to the Police Service should not, therefore, be under pressure from undischarged debts or liabilities and should be able to manage loans and debts sensibly.

Most applicants have debts, such as mortgages, undischarged student loans and credit/store cards. Debts that are within your means and are manageable are not a bar to appointment.

- Applicants who have existing county court judgments outstanding against them or who have been registered bankrupt and their bankruptcy debts have not been discharged will not be considered.
- Applicants who have discharged county court judgments may be considered.
- Applicants who have been registered as bankrupt and their bankruptcy debts have been discharged will only be considered after three years from the discharge of the debt.

- This part of the application form asks you to provide three specific examples from your recent past experience of situations you have encountered (questions 1 to 3). **Your answers will be used to decide if you progress to the next stage of assessment.**
- We are looking for specific behaviours that research has shown are essential to the work of a PCSO. The more of these behaviours we see, the more likely you are to be invited to the next stage of assessment. It is, therefore, important that your answers **describe in some detail what you said and did**. Do not generalise about what you usually do.
- You should read the questions fully and choose your examples very carefully. Each question has a number of prompts. Make sure you answer all of the prompts.
- Answer all of the questions. If you leave a question blank or tell us that you cannot think of any answer, it is very unlikely you will pass.
- In all parts of the form, please write clearly and concisely. If we can't read it or understand it, we can't score it. Pay attention to your **spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar**. You are being assessed throughout this application form on your written skills. We also expect your examples to be focused, succinct and fluently written, as any police report or statement would need to be.
- 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.
- 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.
- **You must not add extra sheets**, write outside the space provided or write between the lines. No marks will be given for evidence outside the space provided.
- The form also asks about your motivation to become a PCSO, your expectations of the role and what preparation you have undertaken to apply (questions 4 to 7).
- The application must be all your own work. Be honest and expect to be questioned on any answers that you give.

### Example reply

We have developed an example answer so that you can see the style of the answer you need to give. This is not a perfect answer but it gives you an idea of the style of the answers we need you to provide. Note how the example given writes about "I" and gives detail about how things were done and when.

Example question and reply:

**PCSOs need to be prepared to take responsibility for making difficult decisions. Think of a situation when you have had to make a difficult decision that might have upset other people, and when you have had to then tell them what you have decided.**

**What was the decision you had to make?** I had been invited to a close friend's wedding and asked to help with the arrangements. The wedding was arranged at quite short notice and the date conflicted with a holiday with my parents and sister. We had already booked the holiday and I had paid a large deposit on it. My friend made it clear how important it was to her for me to be at her wedding, and when I told my family they made it clear that they felt I should go on holiday with them as it had been booked for a long time and could not be rearranged at this late date. I had to decide whether to go on the holiday and upset my friend, or cancel my holiday, lose my deposit and upset my family.

**What did you take into account when making the decision?**

I took into account the fact that she was a very old and close friend who, in the past, had gone out of her way to be with me at events which had been special for me (for example birthday parties and when I got my exam results). However, my family deserved and had been looking forward to the holiday with me and had chosen the hotel and the resort to suit me. I would also lose my deposit. I considered the option of joining my parents at the holiday location a few days later than anticipated but this fell within a peak holiday season and when I checked with the travel agent there were no flights available.

**What decision did you make?** I decided to go to the wedding and cancel the holiday.

**Tell us exactly how you went about telling the other person or people.** I told my sister first, as soon as I had made the decision, as she was likely to know how my parents would react. I then waited until my parents were both at home and had eaten their evening meal and were more relaxed. I turned the TV down and said that Jayne (my friend) had been very good to me over the years and that I really wanted to be there for her wedding. I said that I had decided to go to the wedding and cancel my place on the holiday with them. I said that I knew they would be disappointed but that we would have future holidays together but that Jayne would only have one wedding like this.

