

Sergeants Promotion Pathway Guidance

Introduction

Investing in our people is Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary's priority. Delivering a clear promotion process is key to that investment.

The introduction of the Sergeants Promotion Pathway aims to establish a structured framework for enhancing leadership capabilities at sergeant rank. This initiative is designed to foster high performance and increased public service outcomes while enabling the force to identify officers who are ready for promotion.

Rather than looking at 'who can do a board', the force is now very much supporting those that can actually showcase their competency through practical experience while serving in an acting sergeant rank, as part of the pathway towards achieving substantive promotion.

The new pathway will provide officers with the platform and environment to evidence and demonstrate they are ready for this step into leadership.

Line managers and Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) should actively look to support the development of a diverse and inclusive workforce by encouraging officers to develop themselves regardless of their role's location, and as soon as they see potential. This drive needs to come from the top and they should work with and support the officer's development until they are ready for promotion, and beyond. This is especially important if the officer is from any underrepresented group to ensure we are representatives of the communities we serve.

Once the pathway is complete, officers will be signed off for either substantive promotion (if they possess a historic OSPRE II Pass) or access to the Step 4 Temporary Promotion and work-based assessment without the need to undertake a further promotion board for that rank.

The process is subject to a maximum 6 month development period, during which officers receive comprehensive support. Officers are required to complete and submit written evidence, including monthly reflective practice journals and a "Why Me, Why Now" letter. Their progress will be reviewed monthly by their line manager, with feedback being submitted and serving as supportive evidence.

Additionally, officers will become part of smaller Action Learning Set groups and will receive monthly peer support from a designated sergeant or inspector. Second line managers will provide oversight, and ultimately a panel of senior managers will assess all evidence to make a balanced decision on promotion suitability. Leads for the Action Learning Set are independent advisors facilitating group discussions that aim to identify career goals, strengths and areas for improvement. Through open dialogue with peers, they will guide discussions around work habits, strategies for developing new skills and improving existing ones. The Action Learning Set leads will help officers build their confidence and have greater self-awareness to enable them to navigate workplace challenges more effectively.

It is essential that this pathway is delivered in a way that aligns with the force's priority of fostering compassionate leadership that delivers high performance. The Federation are supportive of the new pathway and will be regularly consulted with as the programme progresses.

Process

Unlike traditional processes, officers are not required to undergo a board. Instead, the pathway involves regular line manager reviews and consideration of performance and development whilst undertaking the pathway. A panel will evaluate this information in combination with the officer's submission of their "Why Me, Why Now" letter and all supporting documentation (reflective practice journals, line manager feedback, and Action Learning Set lead feedback).

There are 4 Steps in the National Police Promotion Process and the journey through the stages should be a continuous one. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary's Sergeants Promotion Pathway sits in the national Step 3. Officers are monitored at all stages, and they must maintain a high level of performance and behaviour at all stages to progress through the process.

Step 1 – competence in current rank

Officers must show competence in their constable rank within their PDR, and have line manager confirmation of eligibility to register for their Sergeants Legal Exam.

Both the officer and their line manager must engage in a Performance Development Review (PDR) discussion and submit evidence of self-learning, directed learning and a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) plan.

If it is deemed by a line manager that an officer is not eligible to register for the exam, they should discuss this with the officer as to the reasons why.

Step 2 – legal knowledge exam

The officer is required to take and pass the promotion legal exam for sergeant rank. Officers who have a valid examination pass and who demonstrate they are ready for promotion are encouraged to apply for the promotion pathway.

Step 3 – promotion process

If an officer meets the requirements in Step 1 and 2, and acquires manager sign-off, they may choose to register to undertake the pathway. Following satisfactory recruitment eligibility checks and PSD / vetting checks, officers will be posted to a long-term acting role to support their development.

Officers will have the opportunity to notify of any personal circumstances that the posting panel may need to take in to consideration at the posting stage. Adjusted Duties officers and those working flexible patterns or reduced hours will have all reasonable efforts made by the Constabulary to secure them an achievable pathway posting. Accessibility to these posts is of key importance.

Over the course of the pathway, the officer will undergo comprehensive performance and development monitoring in the role of a sergeant. This includes the officer completing ongoing reviews and reflective practice journals, ensuring continuous evaluation and improvement.

Monthly line manager progress reviews and Action Learning Set development will be conducted to offer ongoing insights, problem-solving support and guidance. These will be recorded on feedback forms and all documentation must be submitted monthly by participants and contributors to the Resourcing & Development team [mailbox](#) for monitoring purposes.

The second line manager must have reviewed and acknowledged the first line manager progress reviews.

Where required, the process incorporates participation in the accreditation process and completion of learning initiatives, aimed to enhance officer's professional knowledge and skills.

After the first 3 months, the officer is required to complete and submit a 2-page "Why Me, Why Now" letter. This document should demonstrate the officer's competence in essential areas such as skills, experience, values and behaviours necessary for effective operational leadership and team development, vital for fulfilling the responsibilities of the sergeant role. The letter will be reviewed and scored by a panel of three assessors, and assessed alongside the officer's reflective practice journal submissions, line manager feedback and Action Learning Set lead feedback.

Additional information regarding the "Why Me, Why Now" stage can be found below.

If the officer is deemed satisfactory to progress, they will continue to undergo comprehensive performance and development monitoring and engage with their Action Learning Set groups for a further 3 months. During this time, they will receive 360 feedback, which provides an opportunity to receive insights from multiple perspectives, enabling officers to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The officers will also undertake the New Supervisors Course to further enhance their operational and professional leadership capabilities.

Should any drop in performance be identified during this Step 3, they will be reviewed by the Local Area/Command Panel prior to advancing to Step 4, ensuring timely intervention and support.

"Why Me, Why Now" letter

The "Why Me, Why Now" letter requires applicants to submit a concise 2-page document. The emphasis of the letter should be on performance suitability for the sergeant's role rather than the quality of the writing. The assessment of the letter will seek to identify the officers' operational and leadership abilities, dedication to personal development, and commitment to inclusion and well-being.

The assessment process evaluates officers' in role performance against:

- **Force priorities,**
- **The Code of Ethics**
- **Competency and Values Framework (CVF)**
- **Two key criteria from the Skills for Justice Level 4 syllabus, specifically the Learning Outcomes of:**
 - 1. *Be able to conduct briefings and tasking using evidence based information***
 - 2. *Be able to supervise police investigations in line with legal and organisational requirements***

Officers are expected to provide evidence demonstrating skills, experience, values, and behaviours relevant to the sergeant rank through tangible examples. The significant factor being considered is the quality of the officer's performance whilst on the Pathway and not how well they have written their "Why Me, Why Now" letter.

Officers are advised to focus on picking the evidence of their work they are most proud of and presenting it in the letter in a way which is personal to them. The panel will not be looking for a particular style or “buzz” words or phrases but quality evidence.

The letter should focus not only on demonstrating competencies and values in the “Why Now” section but also on addressing the “Why Me” aspect. This approach fosters inclusivity and values diverse ways of thinking. It should include what motivates the officer as a police officer and their aspirations to advance to the rank of sergeant. Relevant evidence from current and past roles can be used to support the application but officers are encouraged to focus on themselves in their evidence, not simply the delivery of tasks or functions

The criteria also includes two elements from the Skills for Justice Qualification Handbook for Police Management. This includes the work based assessment (WBA) modules that temporary sergeants are assessed on. Officers will find it helpful to look at this handbook prior to writing their “Why Me, Why Now” letter. It is also useful in that it shows officers what they will be working towards if they are successful and help them understand fully what being a sergeant entails.

The Skills for Justice Qualification Handbook can be found [here](#). The two specific criteria to be addressed from the qualification are stated below:

1. Conduct evidence based information briefings, taskings and debriefings - Page 17 of the handbook

➤ **Be able to conduct briefings and tasking using evidence based information**

- 2.1 Conduct briefings of individuals in line with their information needs and operational requirements
- 2.2 Use gathered evidence based information to assign tasks to individuals, commensurate with their abilities, training and experience
- 2.3 Confirm that individuals understand assigned tasks and responsibilities
- 2.4 Monitor the progress of tasks against set objectives

2. Supervise police investigations and investigators - Pages 24-25 of the handbook

➤ **Be able to supervise police investigations in line with legal and organisational requirements**

- 2.1 Prepare information for investigations
- 2.2 Evaluate the progress of investigations
- 2.3 Take action to support investigators if necessary
- 2.4 Confirm that individuals are dealt with in an ethical manner, recognising their needs with respect to equality and diversity
- 2.5 Confirm case files are submitted
- 2.6 Verify post-charge procedures are completed in line with operational requirements
- 2.7 Confirm the investigation has been finalised in accordance with national crime recording standards
- 2.8 Complete a lessons learnt log that reflects the outcomes of police investigations
- 2.9 Share lessons learnt with relevant others

The “Why Me, Why Now” template letter can be found [here](#).

Officers should save this template and use to build their letter. The template is restricted to font Arial, size 12, using the default margins (2.54cm), spacing and paragraphing. The restrictions should not be edited. This is to ensure fairness to all officers. The letter must be formatted as a professionally written standard letter, addressed to the Chief Constable, and signed 'Yours Sincerely' with your work address in the top right corner (see below example).

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT
CONSTABULARY

Insert NAME of Department
Address
Date

Dear Chief Constable,

RE: Why Me, Why Now

|

Yours Sincerely
Name / collar number

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure their application complies with the requirements, and officers are advised to double check all documentation is saved in a format which the panel can open. If the letter does not adhere to the above requirements, the assessors may reject the application.

Once the application is complete, it must be submitted to the Resourcing & Development team [mailbox](#). Officers will be notified of the deadline date.

Options for reasonable adjustments to be made at this stage can be found below.

Panel Assessment

The "Why Me, Why Now" letter and all supporting documentation (reflective practice journals, line manager feedback, and Action Learning Set lead feedback) will be assessed by a panel. It will consist of two senior leaders at rank superintendent and above. The third person will be an independent panel member from People & Development Services or Staff Networks. The panel will be decided by the Resourcing and Development Managers. As a priority panels should be diverse, where this is not achievable from the panel format eligibility above, the rank requirements may be reduced to support access from minority groups.

The panel will assess the submitted documentation against four established criteria:

1. [Skills for Justice WBA Qualification Handbook Key Modules.](#)
2. [Competency and values framework \(CVF\)](#)
3. [Code of Ethics](#)
4. [Force vision and priorities](#)

Panel members will review all submissions individually, and then convene to discuss and decide on an overall, holistic assessment. They will be assessing the “Why Me, Why Now” letter in conjunction with the officer’s reflective practice journal submissions, line manager feedback and Action Learning Set lead feedback.

The panel’s objective is to evaluate if officers have demonstrated the competencies and behaviours required for sergeant rank and if the evidence supports that they are ready to be promoted to lead and manage a team.

There is no board or scoring involved. The assessment will result in either a PASS or FAIL outcome based on the quality and relevance of the evidence presented. Evidence will be considered in the round and against the standard of balance of probabilities.

The panel will assess the evidence from the submission of documents alone, and not from the panel members’ knowledge of the officer.

For fairness and consistency, the PASS/FAIL result or feedback will not be disclosed before they are issued by the Resourcing and Development Team.

Step 4 – temp promotion and work-based assessment

If an officer meets the criteria in Step 3 and is deemed suitable for promotion, they will be posted as Temporary Sergeant in rank, commence and work through the NPPF 12-month WBA programme.

Once the officer successfully completes their WBA, they will become substantive. Officers with OSPRE part 2 will not need to complete the WBA. OSPRE part 2 holders are not required to complete the WBA or commence temporary promotion, and will be substantively promoted from the panel date, however they are still required to complete the remaining time on the pathway.

Officers that have had a prolonged continuous exposure to a local long term acting role in excess of 6 months and in the run up to the pathway may be considered by the panel to be ready to commence their temporary promotion and WBA immediately. They will have to continue the remaining 3 months on the pathway.

Unsuccessful Step 3 assessment

In the event an officer is unsuccessful at the “Why Me, Why Now” stage, feedback must be provided to the officer for them to understand areas for development.

It will not be enough for the panel to make comments such as “the evidence was at the wrong level”. There needs to be an explanation of what that means so that the officer can work out what they need to do to develop, especially for future applications. A clear and achievable Development Plan must be set following feedback between the panel and the line manager, with the line manager taking responsibility to create the Development Plan and set relevant timescales and expectations to be achieved before future endorsement to re-enter the pathway can be given.

The Resourcing and Development team can provide support to the assessors recommending the development plan, as well as line managers putting the plan in place.

Applicants have the option to request further feedback from the panel. The panel can internally decide who will provide this feedback and in what format.

Appeals

Officers may lodge an appeal against the decision, however, appeals cannot be solely based on disagreement with the outcome. For example, an officer cannot appeal just because they think they should have passed but did not.

Grounds for appeal must be based on breach of process, e.g. the process not being followed properly and therefore an incorrect decision being reached. Or perverse decisions, e.g. perceived unjust decisions.

Appeals must be lodged by the officer within a reasonable time, normally within 28 days of the outcome of their assessment from Step 3 being received. Appeals will be reviewed by the Resourcing and Development Managers, focusing on process adherence and decision validity rather than reconsidering evidence.

Positive Action

The force is committed to improving greater diversity in leadership positions. Support through recruitment or promotion stages is offered to officers from underrepresented groups, including applicants from minority ethnic or religious backgrounds, LGBTQ+ individuals, women and applicants with disabilities. Positive Action support comes in various forms, including targeted training and development, mentoring, sponsorship, network support, inclusive policies, and committed leadership that promotes inclusion. This initiative provides an opportunity for officers to discuss their preparation, address potential barriers they may encounter, and ensure they are well equipped for the application process.

For more information about how positive action can be used to reduce disadvantage in recruitment and promotion stages, please contact the Inclusion and Wellbeing team [here](#).

Workplace Adjustments / Adjusted Duties Officers

Adjusted duties officers, and officers with workplace adjustments are encouraged to apply for the Pathway. Officers who require additional support and/or workplace adjustments must inform the Resourcing & Development team of the required adjustment at the time of applying.

Each officer's adjustments will be assessed individually on a case-by-case basis, to ensure they are posted to a suitable role. If an officer requires, or is uncertain about needing, reasonable adjustments at any stage of their application, contact the [Resourcing and Development team](#) or the [Strategic Adjusted Duties Advisor](#) for assistance.

Reasonable Adjustments to the Assessment Process

Where participants have a disability, is an adjusted duties officer, or has workplace adjustments in place that they believe could have a bearing on the "Why Me Why Now" assessment, they should raise this in confidence at the start of the pathway.

Officers should complete the Reasonable Adjustments Accommodations Form. The form can be accessed by clicking [here](#). This is then submitted to the [Reasonable Adjustments](#)

[mailbox](#) for review by the promotions and reasonable adjustments and accommodations panel.

For neurodiverse conditions, it is strongly recommended that officers make proactive contact with the Constabulary's Neurodiversity Support Specialist in the [Inclusion & Wellbeing Team](#). Reasonable Adjustments can be made at the assessment stage if required.

Flexible Working

When an officer enters a new role, whether through promotion or otherwise, they will need to re-negotiate any flexible working arrangements with their new line management chain. While the force will try to consider the officer's personal circumstances and location, it may not always be possible to accommodate all needs for everyone. If a flexible working request is declined, it is expected that the role will be worked as advertised.

Reduced Hours Officers

For officers on reduced hours, there is an opportunity to extend their pathway on a pro-rata basis. It is recognised that individuals work at different paces, therefore an extension is not automatically applied. However, the option is available if individuals or their line managers feel that an extension would be beneficial. Open communication is encouraged between officers and their line managers to assess the officer's circumstances, pace of learning and if a pro-rata extension would be helpful.

Officers or their supervisors are to inform the [Resourcing and Development team](#) as early as possible if an extension is likely to be requested.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Pregnant officers on the Pathway must inform their line manager as soon as a pregnancy is confirmed in order for a risk assessment to be conducted to identify any risk to the officer's health or that of their unborn baby. Details are outlined in the [Expectant and Nursing Mothers 21318 Procedure](#).

Consideration will be given to the timing of the baby's due date, the commencement of maternity leave, and the officer's ability to continue on the Pathway. Depending on these factors, the Pathway may be temporarily paused until the officer returns to work and can resume the Pathway. Officers or their supervisors are to inform the [Resourcing and Development team](#) as early as possible to notify them of a pregnancy.

Absences

If an officer requires significant time away from work for a specific need, consideration will be given to extend their Pathway if the absence prevents them from gaining the necessary experience.

An extension is not automatically applied but will be considered should it be deemed beneficial by the individual or their line manager. Officers or their supervisors are to notify the [Resourcing and Development team](#) as soon as possible if an extension is likely to be requested.

Allocation of Long Term Acting Roles for the duration of the Pathway

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary are committed to making the sergeants Promotion Pathway accessible to all. Long term acting roles are essential to the delivery of the pathway, therefore it aims to accommodate the needs of Flexible Workers and individuals on Adjusted Duties to the fullest extent possible.

PSD / Performance and Promotion

In order to commence and complete the Sergeants Promotion Pathway, officers are required to have no pending PSD investigations, no live sanctions, and to be signed off as having an effective PDR. If officers are placed under investigation at any point during the programme, their pathway will be paused until PSD provides instruction to recommence.

If a performance development plan or action plan is put in place during the pathway, the officer cannot progress to Step 4 of the programme (Temporary Promotion and work-based assessment) until they are signed off by the Local Area / Command.