

## **Guidance for the Promotion Assessment Process (NPPF Step 3)**

### **PC to PS**

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#### **Introduction**

The purpose of the promotion assessment process (Step 3 of the National Police Promotions Framework NPPF), is to provide a structure to allow us to identify those ready for promotion. We are not looking to identify those who are best at the process.

The assessment process no longer includes an interview (board). Stepping up to sergeant is a big responsibility and so getting promoted will necessarily not be easy. Candidates should understand that removing the interview does not mean that standards have dropped. Candidates will require the same level of evidence as previous years but will be presenting it through their PDR and letter. We have a certain number of vacancies each year and will only be able to select and promote the number of people who both meet the standard required to supervise safely and meet the number of projected vacancies – it is therefore a competitive process. The number and names of successful candidates will be agreed by a Moderation Panel chaired by the Head of People Services, Learning and Professional Development.

This guidance provides the formal documents underpinning the structure - sections 1 and 2 - and then in the third section provides some advice based mainly on frequently asked questions. Section 4 (a separate appendix) provides a fictional example of evidence.

Please contact Superintendent Kath Lowe, Head of People Services, Learning and Professional Development if you have any queries.

The Police Office Promotion Yammer Group is strongly recommended for those working towards promotion. This Group is a forum to share information and raise questions.

I wish those of you embarking on the promotion assessment every success.

Kath Lowe

Kath Lowe December 2018

## **1. Promotion Process - PC to PS and PS to Inspector**

People Services run promotion processes each year under the National Police Promotions Framework (NPPF) for promotion to PS and Inspector and invite officers who have passed the relevant examination to apply for promotion. The frequency of these processes will normally be once a year for each rank.

Officers will apply by submitting a 2 page Why Me, Why Now letter with their most recent full PDR and, if the sign off for that PDR was more than six months prior to the date of the process, an Interim review to an assessment panel on their LPA or OCU. The Continuous Professional Development section of the PDR, which can cover more than one year, must document progress towards promotion evidencing strengths and areas for development. The Supervisor sign off must indicate whether the applicant is ready for promotion. The letter will evidence Why Me, Why Now against a list of "Step Up to PS or Inspector" competencies with the behaviours illustrated aligned with the CVF.

The application will be assessed by a panel on the officer's LPA or OCU using a grid designed and provided by People Services. The panel will consist of:

- LPA/OCU Commander or Deputy
- A member of the People Directorate or a Staff Association to provide independent scrutiny
- A third person - normally another LPA/OCU SMT member.

One of these panel members must be a member of the Promotion Cadre who has full understanding of the assessment process. The panel therefore includes a mixture of those who know the officer and someone who is independent. Guidance will be provided to the candidates and panel members.

The applications will be graded using a numeric system.

The panel is also asked to indicate whether the officer is ready for promotion and whether they would be prepared to have the officer on their LPA/OCU. The officer will not necessarily be promoted to that LPA/OCU, but this endorsement indicates how confident the panel is in the officer's readiness for promotion to a supervisory role in TVP.

The pass mark will be set by a Moderation Panel chaired by the Head of People Services. This panel will also ensure fairness and consistency across LPAs and OCUs. Successful candidates will be promoted to Temporary PS and then work through the Work Based Assessment Programme. On successful completion of the WBA, they will be made substantive.

External candidates will also be invited to an interview in the same way other transferees are. If their force does not have PDRs, they will be asked to write a "Why Me, Why Now" letter against the CVF competencies.

Appeals will only be accepted once candidates have received their feedback. They will be considered by the Head of People Services, Learning and Professional Development.

## **2. Step up to Sergeant**

This is based on some of the modules from the Work Based Assessment.

**Why Me?** Give the panel an insight into you as an individual.

**Continuous Professional Development** (WBA Manage Personal & Professional Development module points 1.3 and 2)

- Evidence of self-knowledge and understanding your strengths/areas for development and what you have done to address these and prepare for promotion.
- What motivates you as a police officer aspiring to the next rank?
- What do you bring to the role as an individual? What distinguishes you from others?
- If this is a second attempt at promotion, what have you done specifically to address feedback from last time?

**Provide Leadership and Management** (WBA module of the same name points 2 and 3, Supervise police investigations and investigators 2 and 3, Manage Team Performance 2 and 3.4)

- Be able to engage and inspire stakeholders and colleagues
- Be able to deliver results considering problem solving and demand management
- Be able to supervise police investigations in line with legal and organisational requirements
- Be able to allocate and assure the quality of work
- Provide support to team members as needed

## **Why Now?**

### **Operational Competence**

**Conduct evidence based information briefings, taskings and debriefings** (WBA module of same name point 2)

- Be able to conduct briefings and tasking using evidence based information
- Be able to conduct evidence based information debriefings in accordance with legal, organisational and operational requirements

**Prepare for, monitor and maintain police operations** (WBA module of the same name points 2 and 3)

- Be able to prepare for police operations
- Be able to monitor and maintain police operations in line with legal and organisational requirements. (This includes day to day operational incidents not just pre-planned events, large or small scale)

**Supervise the response to incidents, including critical incidents** (WBA module Supervise the response to critical incidents point 2)

- Be able to supervise the response to incidents, including critical incidents

### **3. Guidance for Candidates**

Ideally, an application to take part in the assessment process will be the culmination of a Continuous Professional Development Plan which will have been developed in conjunction with, and supported by, the officer's line managers.

Before candidates submit an application, they should discuss with their LPA/OCU line management (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) whether they are ready for promotion. An application should not therefore come as a surprise to the area/unit or the panel. Some LPA and OCU Commanders or Deputies may wish themselves to have a conversation with their officers. This discussion is encouraged especially if the SMT do not know the officer and/or have concerns about their level of preparedness for promotion. However, it must not be a board in another guise. This would be an abuse of the process and provide grounds for appeal.

If an officer is told they are not ready to apply for promotion, based on knowledge of their skills and potential, that officer may decide to take the advice and not apply. If they decide to apply anyway, because they believe they do have the level of evidence required, then their application must be assessed and scored.

The application is made up of a 2 page Why Me, Why Now letter and PDR (last full year plus an interim review if the sign off was 6 months or more prior to the process). Evidence against the competencies should be looked for from both - not just the letter.

The evidence in the letter should be demonstrating the Step up to PS competencies – see section 2. The Step Up document is divided into two sections - Why Me and Why Now to assist candidates in evidencing both elements required and to help panels when they are scoring applications. The Step Up competencies are based on the Skills for Justice Qualification Handbook for Police First Line Management. This includes the WBA modules that Temporary Sergeants are assessed on. Candidates may find it helpful to look at this handbook prior to writing their letter. It is also useful in that it shows officers what they will be working towards if they are successful and perhaps help them understand better what being a sergeant actually entails. This handbook can be found on the Intranet or on the Police Officer Promotions Group on Yammer.

If the candidate has previously been unsuccessful in the promotion process, they must show, either in their PDR or letter that they have addressed the areas highlighted in their feedback as not meeting the necessary standard. It is therefore important when the panel write their feedback that they provide enough detail for officers to understand what they need to improve. It will not be enough for the panel to make comments such as "the evidence was at PC level". There needs to be an explanation of what that actually means so that the officer can work out what they need to do to develop.

Therefore, it is really important that candidates make sure their PDRs are of a high standard and have a good CPD plan. It is not enough to state that the officer is preparing for promotion - this is an objective and not a plan. It is recommended that

the CPD plan includes self-reflection on the officer's own strengths and areas for development with a plan to capitalise on the first and improve the latter.

The PDR must include an entry from the line manager (either in the end of year sign off or an Interim Review) indicating their assessment of the officer's progress against the CPD plan and readiness for promotion. This should be done in consultation with the second line manager.

Evidence given by candidates in the letter may well overlap sections of the Step Up framework. (See fictional example) This is one of the differences between the letter format and the application forms. It gives candidates more freedom to use their best evidence to good advantage rather than having to manipulate it and shoe horn it into only one competency. Therefore panel/cadre members must not advise candidates that they need to "sign post" their evidence against sections in the letter. This is not what we are aiming for and takes us back towards the more rigid application form framework.

We are not looking for an application form sandwiched between "Dear Chief Constable" and Yours Sincerely". We are looking for a properly written formal letter with an address at the top, proper paragraphs/sentences and good spelling and grammar. We want to see what motivates the candidate as a police officer and aspiring sergeant so the letters will be individual. There is no one way a letter should look.

Candidates often ask who can give them advice about their letter and many go to Cadre members. While it is always valuable to have someone read through the letter to check that it makes sense and is grammatically correct etc (especially for those with a learning difficulty like dyslexia), any advice given is only an opinion and is no guarantee that the panel will see the letter the same way. Candidates would be well advised not to over think and to concentrate on picking the evidence of their work they are most proud of and presenting it in a way which is personal to them. Again, we are not looking for a particular style or particular "buzz" words or phrases.

Using the CARL approach to present evidence is very useful (see fictional example):

**Circumstance**

**Activity** – and in the letter make sure actions are in line with the Core Values Framework at level 2

**Results**

**Learning**

Feedback from candidates is that some cadre members/panel members are advising them not to use up valuable space in the letter with "Why Me" but to go straight to evidencing the competencies/values. This is contrary to official guidance and frustrates our attempts to be more inclusive and value different ways of thinking.

Various questions have been asked about what evidence can be used. Some people have been told that they can only use evidence from the last 2/3 years. This is not the case. People's whole careers have brought them to the point where they are

ready to apply for promotion. So good, relevant evidence can be used from any current and prior role.

Likewise people's careers do not reset to zero when they move LPA/Dept. So the candidates do not need to have been on an LPA or Dept. for any particular length of time to be supported. Support should depend on the evidence. Since we are encouraging people to transfer from other forces to us on promotion and we will have no personal knowledge of them, we cannot say to our own officers that we can only count evidence we have seen for ourselves. If someone has recently moved from another area or has evidence from another force, this can be verified if necessary by contacting the other area/force. Candidates who include evidence which is not known to their line managers should provide the contact details (e mail or phone) of someone who can verify it.

Appeals can be made – but not against the decision alone i.e. a candidate cannot appeal just because they think they should have passed but did not. Grounds for appeal must be based on the process not being followed properly and therefore an incorrect decision being reached. In order for a candidate to know whether they have grounds, they will need to see their feedback. Appeals will therefore not be accepted before the candidate has seen feedback. Appeals are made to the Head of People Services, Learning and Professional Development. There is no time limit but they must be received within a reasonable time – normally within 28 days of the feedback being sent out.

Anybody who needs reasonable adjustments made to take part in the process should make People Services aware when they apply for a promotion pack. We can then agree with the candidate what adjustments are needed.

The promotion "pass" will be valid for 12 months. In the case of those who passed the June 2018 process, the pass will remain valid until February 2020 to bring them in line with the new timing of the process.

If you have any questions please contact Supt Kath Lowe directly.

