



CROWN OFFICE
& PROCURATOR
FISCAL SERVICE

Resourcing Toolkit

This toolkit has been designed to support all employees through every step of the recruitment and selection process for filling vacant posts. It contains relevant guidance and links to sources of assistance for HR, managers, candidates and staff as they navigate the recruitment process.

This is a working document and will be updated periodically in response to feedback and changes in best practice, legislation and policy. The recruitment processes outlined in this document are founded on the principles of selection for appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as stated in the Civil Service Commission [Recruitment Principles](#).

The [HR Resource Team](#) is available to respond to enquiries about this guide, or any matter relating to the recruitment and selection process.



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Section 1: Roles, Responsibilities and Time Frames

Please note that these timeframes act as a guide only and will be dependent upon the level of interest in a post and the availability of board members.

Summary timescales:

Responsibility	Action	Other Information	Action by: Working Days (WD)
Vacancy Holder	Consider methods to fill vacancy	Contact HR to check re compassionate transfer requests/ reserves/ Career Break returns/ Secondments	
Vacancy Holder	Complete Vacancy Filling Business Case form	Submit to Head of Business Management for approval	
Vacancy Holder	Submit approved Vacancy Filling Business Case form to Recruitment Inbox	All vacancies must be approved before any further action can proceed	
Resource Team	Review proposals for filling the vacancy	Review in line with current policy, employment law and legislative requirements	
Vacancy Holder	Complete Advert Template and email to Recruitment in-box	Adverts will not be accepted without full information	Fully completed adverts received by 5pm on Tuesdays will appear in that weeks Staff Notice
Resource Team	Review draft Advert, open vacancy folders	Vacancy folders held in email and shared drive	2 WD
Resource Team	Advertise vacancy and arrange for publishing on Staff Notice		2 week advertising period
Resource Team	Collate applications, acknowledge receipt, update applicant list records	Applications will be electronically stored; HR will pre sift on eligibility, character and Civil Service nationality requirements	2 WDs from closing date
Selection Board/Resource Team	Sift applications, if required		5 WDs from closing date
Selection Board	Notify Resource Team of sift results		2 WD's from sift
Resource Team	Notify candidates of results (by	Unsuccessful and Invites to interview	3 WDs from receipt

	email)		
Resource Team	Prepare timetables, and all related forms for interview boards and email to board members	If required, Resource Team may also provide assistance with interview questions	5 WDs from sift results being issued
Selection Board	Prepare for and conduct interviews	Board members should read all relevant guidance in advance	
Selection Board	Notify Resource Team of results	Candidate rating forms and Recruitment Report required	2 WDs from last interview
Resource Team	Notify candidates (by email)	Successful candidates asked to confirm acceptance of offer within 5 WDs.	5 WDs from receipt of results
Selection Board	Chairperson to pass typed forms to HR Resource Team		5 WDs from last interview
Resource Team	External appointment - Carry out pre-recruitment checks		Requests issued by 2 WDs of candidate acceptance
Resource Team	External appointment - Notify office when all checks are complete	By email/telephone	2 WDs of last check being received
Vacancy Holder	Arrange start date with successful candidate and notify HR		5 WDs from notification of complete checks or acceptance (if internal)
Vacancy Holder	Provide HR Advisor with Change Form	For internal appointments – Operations HR Advisor For external appointments – Resource Team	1 WD of arranging start date
Resource Team	External - Arrange contract and systems access	Internal appointments will receive a letter from their HR Advisor	5 WDs of arranging start date

Section 2: The Vacancy

There are a number of steps that managers must take before they seek to recruit any new employees (including fixed term appointees, secondees and agency workers). This section summarises the steps managers must consider, describes the options available and provides links to further guidance available through PFEye.

[Step 1](#) - Establishing the Vacancy and Vacancy Filling Business Case

[Step 2](#) - Consider the options for filling the vacancy

[Step 3](#) - Advertising a Vacancy

Step 1 – Establishing the Vacancy and Vacancy Filling Business Case

Every vacancy provides an opportunity to review the existing staffing structure and the starting point is to confirm the need to fill the vacancy. This should be reviewed with senior management and approval to fill the vacancy gained using the [Vacancy Filling Business Case](#). Approval must be sought by the Federation Head of Business Management.

Once you have gained authorisation to fill the vacancy, the approval form must be submitted to [HR Resource Team](#).

If there is a new position, or an existing post where the requirements have changed significantly, details of the post must be submitted to the HR Resource Team in order for them to assess whether the post requires to be evaluated using JEGS criteria.

Step 2 - Consider the options for filling the vacancy

Vacancies can be filled via a number of options and managers will look at varying factors when considering how best to fill a post. This may include the nature or duration of the vacancy, whether there are any specialised skills or requirements associated with the post, budget available, the current levels of resource, development opportunities/requirements and business requirements.

Options to Fill a Vacancy

Please note the below options that are available for filling vacancies:

1. Filling a Temporary Post

Options for filling temporary posts normally include:

Temporary Promotion	Temporary promotion is temporary service in a higher graded post other than through substantive promotion. This may be appropriate to backfill for temporary vacancies, such as maternity leave and short term project work. If the option to fill the post by Temporary Promotion is approved, opportunities will normally be advertised across COPFS.
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	Please refer to the Temporary Promotion Policy for further guidance, including selection requirements.
Fixed Term Appointments (FTA) Without Fair and Open Competition	<p>Fixed term appointments are an external resourcing option which may be appropriate where the work to be undertaken is specific and time bound. For example to work on a specific project or to cover for long term leave of other staff, such as maternity leave.</p> <p>Fixed term staff appointed out with fair an open competition may be recruited to provide managers with the flexibility to meet short term needs. This is provided for under the exceptions listed to the Civil Service Recruitment Principles.</p> <p>Please also refer to the Fixed Term Appointments policy information for further guidance.</p>
Temporary Level Transfer	<p>Temporary level transfer is an internal resourcing option used for short-term temporary postings, normally up to a maximum of two years, to accommodate the business needs of the Service.</p> <p>Where the temporary posting is for a period of one year or less the Federation the employee is departing from must ensure there is a post for the employee to return to at the end of the appointment.</p> <p>If the temporary posting is for a period greater than one year then employees are not guaranteed a return to their previous post, although every effort will be made to take their preference(s) into account.</p> <p>Please refer to the Detached Duty Policy for full details.</p>

Whilst the above form the most commonly used vacancy filling options for temporary posts, the below methods may also be available although on a restricted basis. Please consult with HR should you wish to enquire about the suitability of these.

FTA With Fair and Open Competition	<p>This type of appointment meets the criteria set by the Civil Service Commission which comprises appointment on merit through fair and open competition.</p> <p>This option is currently utilised for specifically approved national adverts (e.g. Modern Apprentice programmes and Trainee Solicitor recruitment).</p> <p>Please also refer to the Fixed Term Appointments policy information for further guidance.</p>
Agency Workers	<p>Agency workers may be engaged to meet short term needs, normally for up to two months.</p> <p>Where it is anticipated that an agency contract is required, managers must seek authorisation using the Vacancy Filling Business Case Form. The HR Resource Team will then</p>

	<p>provide instruction on how to arrange the contract.</p> <p>If you feel you have exceptional circumstances for retaining an agency worker longer than two months then contact the HR Resource Team with reasons. If authorisation is given, an agency workers term may be extended however the absolute maximum period is eleven months. Basic Disclosure certificates are required and agency workers should not be asked to work on sensitive casework.</p> <p>When ending an agency worker contract, they must not be given any impression before their assignment ends that they will be re-engaged at a later date.</p>
<p>Secondments/Loan arrangements in to COPFS</p>	<p>In order to utilise expertise, knowledge and skills gained in other organisations, it may at times be appropriate to arrange temporary cover through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan – civil servants from another Government department; or • Secondment – employees from an organisation out with the Civil Service.

2. Filling a Permanent Vacancy

Where a permanent post is being advertised, it will normally be advertised internally (within COPFS and Common Citizenship) in the first instance enabling existing staff an opportunity to apply for vacant positions. Please refer to Step 3 – Advertising a Vacancy for further information.

Permanent posts will not be advertised externally unless in exceptional circumstances. Requests for permanent external advertising must be considered in consultation with HR.

Other permanent vacancy filling options include:

Managed Moves

In most cases, vacant posts will be advertised enabling existing staff or external applicants an opportunity to apply for positions within COPFS. Managed moves may also be required which are undertaken to ensure that the needs of the business are met (e.g. Units being staffed with people of appropriate skill level) or for staff development purposes.

Deployment Exercises

Deployment exercises are a variation on a managed move whereby employees are given the opportunity to request a move to a preferred location or function, out with the normal advertising process. Senior management will consider the requests whilst taking account of business requirements and individual skills as part of that process.

COPFS will endeavour to undertake two deployment exercises per year.

Compassionate Transfers

Compassionate transfers are intended to address the need for a transfer due to particularly compelling circumstances, unrelated to work. Managers or employees should refer to the [Compassionate Transfer](#) policy where they feel that this type of move may be required.

Step 3 – Advertising a Vacancy

The advertising process will be tailored to the option chosen for filling a vacancy. Temporary appointments will be advertised, or filled, as detailed within the relevant policy.

Where the vacancy holder has identified that a permanent vacancy needs to be advertised internally, the following steps should be followed:

- Submit the Vacancy Filling Business Case form to the [HR Resource Team](#)
- Contact the Resource Team to check whether there are any suitable candidates who need to be considered for [compassionate transfer](#) prior to open advertisement
- Consider whether any suitable employees are looking to return from secondment/loan/career break (HR can confirm this).
- Complete the [job advert template](#) and email to the [HR Resource Team](#) using the below guidance

Job Advert Template (Internal Adverts)

A Job Advert Template should be completed for all internal adverts. Fully completed adverts received by 5pm on Tuesday will be advertised in the Staff Notice on the Friday of the same week.

Contract Terms

Vacancy holders should confirm here if the post is full time/part time, permanent or temporary.

It should also be noted however that applicants can enquire about an application using an [Alternative Working Arrangement](#) and COPFS are obliged to consider this as required under the AWA policy. HR can provide assistance where necessary.

Creating a Job Profile

The Job Profile combines the Job Description (the duties and specific outcomes) and the Person Specification (the key competencies required and any additional essential or desirable criteria). It is important to be clear about what is expected of the post holder; identify main activities and results; nature of contacts, relationships and communications that the post holder will have with people inside and outside the service. This information will be required for the advert and will influence the recruitment process decisions at advert, sift (if required) and interview.

Person Specification

The Person Specification details the behaviours required to carry out the role as identified within the [COPFS Competency Framework](#).

Vacancy Holders will be required to identify at least three key competencies (four for grade C and above) from the Framework which are most relevant for this post. You should then briefly describe in what way each of these competencies will be utilised in the role.

Establishing Essential and Desirable criteria

Essential criteria (out with the key competencies identified) are those which the post holder must hold to be able to perform the job effectively. Candidates who do not satisfy this essential criteria should be removed at the sift, including candidates applying under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme.

Skills and knowledge that can be learned within a reasonable time will not normally be considered to be essential criteria e.g. knowledge of Microsoft office, FOS, PROMIS, etc. However, these can be included for temporary posts where the candidate is expected to become effective in the role at an earlier stage.

Desirable criteria are those that may enable the post holder to perform better or require a shorter familiarisation period.

Any criteria specified should be justified and specific.

Essential or desirable criteria may fall into one of the following categories:

- **Previous experience and skills.** Skills required should be drawn from the competency framework if appropriate. You should note that specifying a minimum length of experience may be discriminatory and would not normally be used; quality of experience should be detailed instead. Where skills can be learned, care should be taken not to restrict the pool by insisting applicants have those skills already.
- **Qualifications.** Out with the standard entry requirements, qualifications would not normally be specified for posts at Band D and below, however for posts that do require specific qualifications consideration will be given to the grade and range of the post. Vacancy Holders should exercise caution when specifying qualifications as essential or desirable criteria as this is potentially discriminatory and may restrict the candidate pool unnecessarily.

Job Specific Criteria

- **Standard Entry Requirements**
Qualifications required are passes in 5 standard grades (grade 3 or higher) or equivalent; or proven skills in general office work, including knowledge and use of Microsoft Word. Literacy and fluency in English are essential requirements.
- **Trainee Solicitors**
Qualifications required are a Degree in Scots Law (or an equivalent Honours Degree in other subjects, combined with a degree in Scots Law). Candidates are also required to obtain a Diploma in Legal Practice from a Scottish university and an entrance certificate from the Law Society of Scotland.

- Qualified Solicitor Roles
Candidates for legal posts must be a qualified solicitor in Scots Law

Special/Other conditions of Post

Special conditions will detail any specific requirements relevant to the role being advertised (e.g. the requirement for regular/extensive travel).

Other conditions of post will detail the general requirements for all roles. At present, successful candidates for permanent positions will be expected to remain within their post for a minimum period of two years, unless they are successful in obtaining a post in a higher grade or are moved to address a business need.

Selection Panels

Board members will normally be identified at the advertising stage by the vacancy holder.

There must be a minimum of two members on any selection panel, with at least one member normally being external to area of work (i.e. out with the management chain). At least one member must have undergone competency based recruitment training, although it is recommended that all panel members have undergone this training. Training is available through the [Learning & Development Division](#) who organise courses on a regular basis.

The board must also have a gender balance (wherever possible) and be aware of the COPFS policies on equality and diversity.

The interview panel will normally consist of grades a level higher than the post being recruited for, however this policy will not apply to HR representatives.

The HR Resource Team is available to assist in identifying suitable board members, if necessary.

Dates/Location for Sifts and Interviews

Adverts will normally confirm the dates scheduled for the sift (if applicable) and interview(s). The HR Resource Team will then review these dates and plan activities in order to provide administrative support throughout the recruitment exercise. Please take account of our standard timescales (as detailed in Section 2 above) when considering sift/interview dates.

It is also important for sift/interview rooms to be booked in advance in order to avoid unnecessary delays at a later stage.

General Guidance

You should make sure that content of your job advert is non discriminatory. HR can provide assistance in considering this however further information is available in the [Chair and Board Members Guide](#) and [Disability Rights Commission's website](#)

You should also note that it is COPFS policy that candidates who declare a disability are entitled to request and receive a guaranteed interview where they meet the essential minimum criteria for the post (further information about this is available within the [Chair and Board Members Guide](#)).

External Advertising

Fixed Term Posts **without** fair and open competition

This type of appointment is organised without formal advertising. Candidate pools may be secured from a variety of sources, including referrals from the job centre and speculative applications.

Offices will retain responsibility for the recruitment of Fixed Term Staff (without fair and open competition) however a formal business case must be submitted to HR prior to approaching any candidate.

Managers should refer to the [Fixed Term \(without fair and open competition\) guidance](#) prior to organising any appointment of this kind.

Fixed Term Posts **with** fair and open competition

This type of appointment is organised through formal advertising through fair and open competition and with candidates being selected on merit. The HR Resource Team will retain responsibility for these recruitment exercises and liaise with offices where required.

If there is a prospect of permanency, adverts should be headed "Fixed Term Appointment with a Possibility of Permanency". This is because staff employed under this contract can apply for vacancies advertised internally or be confirmed as permanent employees during the time of their fixed term appointment without making a further application. HR must be consulted prior to any conversion to permanency.

Permanent Posts

Where approval has been given to recruit on a permanent basis via advertising, the following process will normally be followed:

Order of Adverts	Restricted Internal	Internal	Common Citizenship	CS Jobs Portal (priority for Civil Service Surplus)	External (priority for Civil Service Surplus in advance)
COPFS Redeployees	x				
Level Transfer		x	x	x (optional)	
Promotion		x	x	x (optional)	
Fair & Open Competition				x (essential)	x

Key Points to Permanent Advertising:

- Initially the vacancy will be open to internal redeployees (where these have been formally identified). HR will assist in matching candidates to the vacancies available
- If there are no suitable redeployees then the vacancy may be advertised as a level transfer opportunity on the COPFS Intranet and Common Citizenship site for a period of **two weeks** to give those staff looking to transfer the opportunity to apply prior to offering the post as a promotion opportunity.
- If there are no suitable applications on level transfer, the post may be re-advertised on promotion on the COPFS Intranet and Common Citizenship site with a **two week** closing date.
- Where applications are invited from both level transfer and promotion candidates in the first instance, level transfer applicants will have priority consideration.
- Vacancies may also be advertised on CS Jobs Portal with a **two week** closing date for the attention of surplus staff across the Civil Service (permanent level transfer opportunities only). This can be done after internal advertising is concluded or at the same time.
- The CS Jobs Portal may also be used to advertise roles to the wider Civil Service rather than external advertising.
- If there are no applications from CS Jobs, the post may then be advertised externally, following consultation with HR.

Any exceptions to the above must be approved by the HR Resource team.

If there are concerns about the number or quality of potential internal candidates the post may be advertised externally in the first instance. Examples where this might be appropriate include where a post is specialised and there is a limited number of people with relevant skills that can apply, or where a post is historically difficult to fill. In these instances the vacancy holder should discuss the most suitable advertising options with the HR Resource Team.

Section 3: The Application Process

All prospective applicants are advised to read through the [Candidates Guide to Competency Based Selection](#) prior to submitting an application. Further information on the COPFS Competency Framework and Competency Based Selection methods are also available through the [Intranet](#).

Supporting Declaration

All applications must be supported by the candidates reporting and countersigning officers. This confirms that the applicants meet the criteria required for the post being advertised and that if successful they can be released.

Submitted applications that are not supported will normally be sifted out by the HR Resource Team.

Applications may not be supported where the candidate's transfer from their existing post would conflict with the wider interests or objectives of COPFS.

Section 4: The Selection Process – an Overview

General Principles

- Vacancy filling must be approved at each stage
- The HR Resource team will coordinate the administrative processes for recruitment of staff at all grades
- The selection process will normally include:
 - HR Pre sift
 - Formal sift of applications, and then
 - Selection interview
- Selection panels will determine if a formal sift is required based on guidance provided below.
- Where more than one candidate meets the essential criteria at interview, desirable criteria can be considered in order to select the most suitable candidate.
- Candidates may be required to attend an assessment centre, depending on the role being advertised

HR Pre Sifting

Eligibility Criteria for Internal Appointments

For all internal appointments the pre sift process includes checking whether applicants are eligible for application to specific posts. Again the HR Resource Team will check applications submitted to ensure they meet the following rules:

- Applicants have been recruited through fair and open competition (Note – agency staff, student placements, and fixed term contracts without fair and open competition do not satisfy this criteria)
- Applicants are current COPFS employees or Civil Service employees where applicable. (Note – staff on loan or secondment to COPFS are not normally eligible to apply for internal vacancies)
- Application for any post is based on the candidate's substantive grade
- Candidates must have received official written confirmation that they have passed their probation period
- All candidates applying on level transfer have completed two years within their current post.
- Live disciplinary warnings, including attendance management warnings, will normally preclude candidates from applying for any advertised post.
- Applicants are not on a performance improvement notice
- Training Deputes applying for temporary or permanent promotion must first successfully achieve accreditation prior to applying.

Fixed Term employees recruited through fair and open competition will be eligible to apply for permanent level transfer within the two year rule, however probationary periods must first be concluded.

Internal applications must also be supported by an employee's reporting and countersigning officer.

Eligibility Criteria for External Appointments

The first stage of the pre sift process for external applications is checking whether applicants are eligible for appointment. The HR Resource Team will check applications submitted to ensure they meet the following rules:

- COPFS is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and will not usually accept applications from external candidates who have previous convictions relating to violence, dishonesty or drugs. (See Annex A for further details).
- COPFS must adhere to strict Civil Service Nationality rules – further details can be found on the [Civil Service](#) website
- Consideration will be given where candidates have a conflict of interest, secondary employment and any past or pending complaints by any professional body of which they are a member.

Applicants who do not meet the requisite eligibility criteria will be sifted out by the HR Resource Team before their applications can proceed to the formal sifting/interviewing stages.

Any queries regarding a candidate's suitability should be directed to the HR Resource Team.

Pre Existing relationships

In addition to the HR Resource Team checking applications for eligibility of appointment, they will also check candidate applications for pre-existing relationships (e.g. family relationship or where a relationship with a COPFS employee exists out with the workplace).

Board members are also required to advise the HR Resource Team if they have a pre-existing relationship with any candidate.

In order to ensure impartiality, where a pre-existing relationship exists that creates a conflict of interest, a replacement board member will normally be sought, either for the entire recruitment process or for assessing the candidates' suitability for the post.

The Sift

Applications submitted for each vacancy may be sifted to assess candidates' suitability to carry out the role. The decision to carry out a sift will be determined by the selection panel, taking account of the level of competition. However, where essential criteria has been identified (out with the key competencies detailed within the advert), candidates must be assessed in order to determine whether or not this has been satisfied.

Full guidance regarding the sift process and marking criteria can be found in the [Candidates Guide to Competency Based Selection](#) and the [Chair and Board Members Guide](#).

The sift and selection interview may be undertaken by different board members, however it is desirable that at least one member of the selection board is involved in both.

The HR Resource Team will provide sift papers to board members as required however the [Sift Record](#) and [guidance](#) are also available on the Intranet.

Sifting Level Transfer Applicants

It is expected that candidates who apply on level transfer will usually be invited to interview, providing they meet the normal sift criteria and any essential criteria identified out with the key competencies detailed in the advert.

Informing Applicants of Sift Results

Applicants will be informed of the sift decision in accordance with the timescales identified in [Section 1](#). Applicants successful at the sift will be informed at the same time wherever possible and their interview date, time and location will be communicated by letter (normally emailed).

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

COPFS is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. Part of this commitment is to guarantee an interview to eligible candidates who have declared a disability provided that they meet the essential minimum criteria for the post.

Further information in relation to this can be found in the [Candidates Guide to Competency Based Selection](#) and the [Chair and Board Members Guide](#).

The Interview and Other Selection Methods

Full guidance regarding interview selection can be found in [Candidates Guide to Competency Based Selection](#) and the [Chair and Board Members Guide](#).

Where an advertised vacancy receives only one applicant, the board will review the application to ensure it meets the essential criteria and determine whether an interview is required. Please note that interviews are required for permanent promotion.

Further Assessment of Suitability

The board may decide in advance of the interviews that they require further evidence to assess candidates for specialist or senior positions in the Service. Further assessment may include presentation on a relevant topic at interview, the submission of a piece of written work prior to the interview, or completion of an online assessment.

The Chair of the board should inform the [HR Resource Team](#) of any further assessments and provide full details on how this will be assessed in order that they can instruct candidates properly.

Assessment Centres

In addition to a competency based interview, candidates may also be invited to an assessment centre depending on the role being advertised.

Assessment centres will be post specific, and designed and run by assessment centre providers. They are designed to assess management and post specific skills and may include any of the following:

- Personality style and values questionnaires
- Ability reasoning tests
- Managerial judgement tests
- Case studies
- Role play exercises
- Group exercises

Candidates invited to assessment centres will be given five working days notice wherever possible. In some cases assessment centres and interviews will be held on the same day. Where this is not the case, the assessment centre will take place before the interviews. Feedback from the assessment centre will be offered to candidates by our assessment centre providers, this may be on the day of the assessment centre, or soon after depending how long it takes to compile the reports. The type of feedback is dependant on the assessment centre, for example where candidates undergo personality questionnaires it is necessary to book a psychologist to provide feedback

Vacancy Filling: General Principles for Grade Specific Recruitment

COPFS recruits for a wide range of grades and jobs each year. Different recruitment methods are often used for different grades in order that the most appropriate selection method is used for appointments to the Service.

Trainee Solicitors

COPFS is committed to providing rewarding legal careers. Therefore, where resources permit and a business case supports it, COPFS will offer a number of traineeships to qualified graduates for a two year fixed term period. This type of appointment will not guarantee appointment to any permanent post thereafter.

Arrangements for recruitment may differ from year to year dependent on business need, however COPFS legal traineeships will normally be advertised on a fair and open basis and appointments made on merit.

Making the Selection Decision

Selection Decisions will normally be based on the range of evidence presented to the board at interview.

Full guidance is available in the [Candidates Guide to Competency Based Selection](#) and the [Chair and Board Members Guide](#).

The Chairperson is responsible for completion of the [Candidate Rating Form](#) for each candidate and the [Recruitment Board Report](#) following the guidance provided by HR. Where there is no consensus on scores or ranking, the majority will make a final decision on the outcome of the selection process.

Communicating the Decision

Applicants will normally be informed of board results within seven working days of the last interview, however this will vary according to the type and size of exercise that has been carried out. Where this timescale is extended, the selection panel or the HR Resource Team will inform candidates of an expected date for results to be issued.

Feedback

Applicants are entitled to feedback at each stage of the recruitment process, where this is reasonably practical;

- At the sift stage, candidates can request their sift scores
- After the interview, candidates can request a copy of the candidate rating form and board members may be available to provide further feedback

Appeals and Civil Service Commission Complaints

Candidates can appeal for non selection at either sift or interview stage, providing their appeal is within grounds specified within the [Candidates Guide to Competency Based Selection](#). Candidates can also make a complaint to the [Civil Service Commission](#) if they believe the Service has breached the requirements of the [Recruitment Principles](#).

Where an appeal is upheld, COPFS will take steps to remove disadvantage or compensate for actual loss.

Section 5: Posting the Candidate

Release dates for internal appointments

Staff moving to a new post in COPFS will normally be expected to take up the new post within **six weeks** of the selection decision. Where a manager believes a candidate cannot be released within this timescale, they should discuss this further with the importing office. If an agreement cannot be reached then permission to delay the release must be sought from the Director of HR.

Pre-employment checks for external appointments

The HR Resource Team will endeavour to start new entrants within six weeks however this is reliant on pre-recruitment checks being returned timeously. The HR Resource Team will keep managers informed of reasons for any delay and give estimated times of checks being returned where possible.

Managers should also bear in mind that a period of notice may also have to be served before a new entrant can join COPFS.

All new entrants

Disclosure checks must be completed for all new entrants to the Service; this includes those new entrants who have been employed on a Fixed Term contract without fair and open competition or are transferring from other government departments. Managers should advise the HR Resource Team of contact details, so that a Disclosure application can be issued. The Resource Team will confirm when the Disclosure is clear and a start date can be arranged.

New entrants on permanent or fixed term (with fair and open competition) contracts

In addition to the Disclosure checks, successful applicants on these contracts will be required to undergo a health assessment and references will be sought prior to a formal offer of employment being made.

Section 6: Recruitment Audit Process

In order to assess our recruitment activity, the HR system is audited regularly to ensure it meets the requirements of the organisation.

Each year, the Civil Service Commission undertake an audit of our recruitment policies and practices to ensure we adhere to the principles of appointment on merit through fair and open competition. A report is then produced confirming the level of risk associated with COPFS recruitment process and, if necessary, recommendations are made for improvement which HR review in line with current policy.

Accordingly recruitment competitions should be fully documented and the papers retained for 12 months from the end of the competition (this includes the advertisement, application forms, sift criteria, board reports, campaign summary and other relevant papers relating to the competition). The HR Resource Team will maintain all records in relation to concluded recruitment exercises.

For fixed term contracts the advertisement and supporting literature will be retained for the duration of the appointment so that the basis on which the post was publicised is known in the event of extension or wider deployment being considered.

COPFS is also required to publish information on recruitment, including the use of specified exceptions to the recruitment principles. In addition, the HR Resource Team will compile and monitor equal opportunities data taken from all internal and external recruitment.

From time to time, the HR Resource team may conduct an internal audit of COPFS recruitment exercises.

Annex A – Criminal Convictions: Statement of Principles

COPFS is exempt from the conditions laid down in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

1. COPFS takes a serious view of criminal convictions and will take such convictions into consideration when assessing the suitability of applicants for posts within the service. As a general principle we will consider the individual circumstances of each conviction declared by an applicant.
2. A direct penalty measure or order imposed on an applicant - for example, a Fixed Penalty Notice, Fiscal Fine or an Anti Social Behaviour Order, is seen as equivalent to a conviction.
3. We recognise that the impact of a conviction may be significantly diminished over time and this will be taken into account.
4. In the case of offences punishable by imprisonment, whether or not a period of imprisonment has been imposed, we will reach a view as to whether the offence would disqualify an applicant from appointment.
5. In the particular case of drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, we will not consider an application from an applicant found guilty of the offence for a period of 12 years from date of conviction, unless exceptional circumstances had applied. After a 12-year period has elapsed, the circumstances of the offence will be considered in the overall assessment of the applicant.
6. In relation to other driving offences, where a period of disqualification has been imposed, we would not normally consider an application for 2 years from the end of the disqualification period.
7. Where there is a pattern of repeated offences, including those dealt with by administrative penalty or otherwise, and including repeated driving offences which had not resulted in disqualification, we would also consider this as potentially excluding an applicant from consideration until a period free from such offences, normally two years, had elapsed.

In COPFS we are acutely aware of our position as the public prosecutor and as such, we will not accommodate convictions for crimes involving drugs, violence and dishonesty.