

APPLICANT GUIDANCE NOTES

Thank you for the interest you have shown in Thames Valley Police. Please complete the enclosed application form which includes a diversity monitoring form and return it by the closing date. If you wish to forward a Curriculum Vitae in support of your application please read the guidelines below.

Introduction

Thames Valley Police is committed to developing a workforce which reflects the communities we serve. We are committed to valuing and supporting our people and eliminating all forms of harassment and unfair bias. We aim to be flexible and adaptable in promoting policies which help to realise the full potential of our diverse workforce.

The details provided on your application forms part of the information we use to decide if you should be interviewed. The following notes are to help you produce a good application.

If you wish to submit an alternative method of application e.g. electronic or audio please contact the relevant Human Resources (HR) Department for advice.

You should read all of the information provided. The role profile and role specification outline the duties you will be expected to carry out and the required competencies.

Information about you will be treated in strict confidence. The first section of the application form and diversity monitoring form will not be available to the short listing panel; these will be used for monitoring and recruitment purposes outside of the initial selection process. The diversity monitoring form will not be used during any part of the selection process.

How to Complete the Application Form

The application form should be completed in black ink and BLOCK LETTERS or word processed. Where boxes appear requesting you to select a choice, please enter an 'X' in the appropriate box. When completing the form electronically, the boxes asking for detailed information will automatically expand as you fill them; use the tab key to move between fields. When completing the application form manually, please attach additional sheets of paper as necessary.

Please avoid the use of abbreviations and jargon.

The application form is a standard form used for all jobs, so do not worry if you are not able to enter information in all the sections e.g. qualifications or work experience, just show that you have not missed a section by writing 'Not Applicable' or 'N/A'.

Where the application is being returned electronically, the submission of a completed application form will be deemed to constitute the author's signature and commitment to the declaration. Formal signatures will be sought at interview.

Application Form Part 1

Including a Curriculum Vitae

An application form must be submitted in all cases, however, if in addition you wish to provide a separate Curriculum Vitae it will not be submitted for short listing unless:

- All personal details are omitted e.g. name, address, date of birth etc.
- The information provided covers the same areas as requested on the application form.

Internal Applicants

Internal applicant refers to salaried employee of Thames Valley Police.

Thames Valley Police fully support the concept of career development and encourages members of staff to apply for other posts within the organisation. New employees and employees changing role will be expected to complete 12 months in their role before seeking a move. An individual may be considered for a new role having satisfactorily completed his/her probationary period. There will be exceptions to this principle, for example in the case of redundancy or for reasons connected with an individual's capability to perform to a satisfactory level. Any exception during the probationary period will only be permitted with the prior approval of the Head of Human Resources.

Internal applicants, who are applying for a secondment, rather than a permanent position, must ensure that their HR Manager supports their application to ensure they will be released from their current role, should they be accepted for the secondment.

Job Share and Part Time Working

If the job for which you are applying is open to job share or part time working it will be stated in the job advertisement. If you wish to job share you may find a partner yourself and apply as a pair (but using separate application forms). Please state on your form, in the appropriate section, your job share partner's name. Alternatively, you can apply as a single job sharer and should you be offered an appointment it may be possible for you to commence duties on a part time basis subject to a suitable partner being found.

Business Interests

Employees are permitted to undertake additional employment where this does not conflict with the interests of the police service, adversely affect their performance, undermine public confidence in the service and/or bring it into disrepute. Employees in Salary Bands 1, 2 & 3 are required to notify their BCU/OCU Commander or Department Head through their HR Manager, in writing, of any business interests they may have. Employees in Salary Bands 4 & 5 and above are required to seek permission, in writing from their BCU/OCU Commander or Department Head through the HR Manager before undertaking any business interest. Any employee considering secondary employment should discuss the matter with their HR Manager before accepting an offer of such work.

Politically Restricted Posts

Certain posts within the Force are "politically restricted". A post is politically restricted from Salary Band 5 or equivalent and above, and restricts employees from the following activities:

- Holding office in a political party
- Canvassing at elections
- Speaking or writing publicly on matters of party political controversy
- Being a candidate for public elected office (other than to a parish or community council)

Exemption may be granted in some cases (see Politically Restricted Posts Policy).

Membership of Unacceptable Organisations

National policy prohibits police officers and staff from being members of organisations whose constitution, aims, objectives or pronouncements contradict our general duty to promote race equality e.g. British National Party, Combat 18 and the National Front. This applies to all police forces in England and Wales.

Security Clearance

The nature of police work and sensitivity of information makes it necessary to ensure that people employed or working in support of the police service are reliable, trustworthy and of sound integrity, therefore, police vetting and security checks are part of the selection process. If your application is taken forward, the Central Vetting Unit will send you a number of questionnaires for completion and return.

The level of vetting depends upon the job role. The process includes identity checks as well as a thorough review of police data bases to confirm your suitability and the absence of any conflict of interest relating to your family or associates.

Character references form part of the vetting process.

Employer's References

At the provisional offer stage of the recruitment process two references will be requested from your present and/or previous employer; a character reference for security vetting, as above and an employment reference for the purpose of checking skills and competencies etc. It is important that both requests are responded to as each will serve two distinctly different purposes in the recruitment process. Referees will only be approached with your permission and where applicable.

If employer's references are not available, personal references will be sought from at least one other person who knows you in a work related or educational capacity and is able to comment on your aptitude for the post e.g. Supervisor or Tutor. References will always be taken from previous police service employment.

Residency

The National Vetting Policy states that, in order for meaningful vetting to be carried out, applicants must have resided in the UK for a minimum period of 3 years. Thames Valley Police will, however, operate a flexible approach to this and applicants who do not meet the residency requirements may still be considered. There are certain exemptions to the 3 year residency requirement which include; working abroad in the UK armed forces or for a UK Government organisation and short term absence on holiday abroad (not exceeding 2 months). Applicants will be expected to provide a police certificate of good conduct from the country or countries they have visited; if

this is not possible we may be able to consider work/character references. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Convictions & Cautions

Convictions or cautions will not necessarily bar you from appointment, depending on the severity, circumstances and number of the offence(s). However, applicants with convictions for serious arrestable offences, or a history of offences relating to dishonesty, drugs, violence, sexual offences, or anything connected with discriminatory behaviour will not be considered.

In addition, conviction for some offences including drink driving, driving without insurance or a series of motoring offences will not be considered until a specified period has elapsed. For drink driving the period is 10 years; for other offences you should make enquires with the HR Department dealing with your application.

On the vetting forms you will be asked to disclose convictions, cautions and other involvement with the police. You must be completely open with your disclosure as a failure to disclose matters may result in your application being terminated.

Tattoos and Facial Piercings

Tattoos and facial piercings will not necessarily preclude you from appointment; it depends on their size, nature, location and health and safety implications (for piercings). Some facial piercings and tattoos could potentially offend members of the public or colleagues or bring discredit to the police service. Each case will be considered on its merits. Tattoos containing images perceived to be depicting violence, sexism, racism, religious intolerance or homophobia will not be acceptable. If you have piercings and/or tattoos on your face, neck, forearms or hands you should describe them, including their nature, words used, size and location as applicable.

Application Form Part 2

Qualifications and Training

In this section, please give details of any qualifications obtained at school, college or university. Do not forget to include any other special skills or training e.g. apprenticeship, I.T., languages.

Present and Previous Employment

Please give the names and addresses of your present and previous employers, the dates you were employed, the salary, job title, main duties and responsibilities, and your reason for leaving. These should be in the order in which you held the jobs, starting with your most recent employer. This section should include career breaks and voluntary or temporary employment; particularly where you do not have previous, permanent paid work experience.

Why You Are Applying for This Job

In this section, you should state why you want the job and why you think your skills and abilities are suitable. You will be assessed on the competencies required to fulfil the role outlined in the role profile and role specification or job description and person specification. It is, therefore, essential that you take the opportunity to demonstrate the relevant behaviours, skills, knowledge and experience in relation to the post applied for. This is known as a competency based approach.

Use the information in the role profile, role specification and advertisement to identify the competencies required. You should then consider situations from your past experience that best demonstrate the competency in question. This experience could be from a work situation or from any other situation that you feel to be relevant e.g. as a member of a voluntary organisation or school governor position.

Role profile:

This provides detailed information on the post. It outlines the activities the role holder will be expected to effectively deliver and the required behavioural competencies.

Role specification:

This provides details of the job purpose, accountabilities and knowledge, skills and experience required. "Essential" criteria are those which you must have to carry out the responsibilities of the job. "Desirable" criteria are extra requirements which it would be preferable to have.

We use a competency based approach to assist us in selecting the most suitable applicants for the role and to eliminate and unfair bias. By clearly stating your skills and abilities we can compare these against the requirements of the post to accurately assess your application.

Applicants with Disabilities

Please state on the diversity monitoring form any special arrangements you require during the recruitment process.

Records

All information with regard to recruitment will be collected stored and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Diversity information will be collected and used for no other purposes than monitoring for diversity in recruitment. Successful applicant details are kept on personal files. Unsuccessful applicant forms will be kept for a period of 12 months and then confidentially destroyed.

SHORT LISTED APPLICANTS

The following information is for applicants whose application has been selected for the next stage of the recruitment process.

Tests

You may be required to undertake certain tests in the recruitment process to demonstrate skills and competencies required in the role. The tests will be used as part of the decision making process for appointment. If testing is required you will be informed.

Information for applicants who are selected for interview

Sickness Data/Medical Questionnaire

You will be asked to complete a confidential medical questionnaire, which you should bring along with you to interview, contained within a confidential envelope. The questionnaire will be viewed only by our team of Occupational Health practitioners, if you are selected for the post after interview. Should further information be required, you may be requested to authorise your own doctor or specialist to disclose details of your medical history to the Occupational Health Practitioner. Based on the information disclosed in the medical questionnaire and on the result of such other enquires made, a medical examination may be deemed necessary. The Occupational Health Practitioner will advise whether or not you are fit enough for the proposed appointment.

Certificates for Qualifications

You will be asked to provide original certificates for qualifications, training and licenses that you have included on your application form. Copies will be retained with your application and transferred to your personal file if you are successful at interview. In addition, random checks will be made with issuing examination boards or institutions.

Asylum and Immigration Act 1996

Thames Valley Police has a legal obligation to ensure that we only employ people eligible to work in the United Kingdom. As part of this process you will be asked to provide documentary evidence of permission to live and work in the UK e.g. passport, birth certificate, work permit. These original documents will be checked on the day of your interview and copies retained as part of our vetting process.

Disability

Thames Valley Police is committed to removing unnecessary barriers to the employment of disabled people and recognises that some people may require special arrangements, in order that they may compete on equal terms with other applicants at interview and/or testing. Please inform the relevant HR Department if you require specific arrangements.

WORKING FOR THAMES VALLEY POLICE

This is a brief overview of Thames Valley Police, who we are, our aims and what we can offer you as an employer.

Applicants who are offered employment you will receive further details later in the recruitment process.

Introduction

Thames Valley Police is the largest non-metropolitan police force in the country. Covering 2,200 square miles of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, we serve a population of 2.1 million, plus the six million visitors who visit the region every year. The Force covers three counties and is policed by around 4,400 officers, 134 police community support officers, 334 special constables, 448 volunteers and 2,889 police staff, working within specialist departments and five police areas known as Basic Command Units (BCUs):

- Berkshire East
- Berkshire West
- Buckinghamshire
- Milton Keynes
- Oxfordshire

Thames Valley Police is also responsible for policing the largest stretch of motorways in Britain - 196 miles. The sections of the M4, M40 and M25 within the area are amongst the busiest motorways in Europe.

Thames Valley Police's aim is: Working with our communities to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime.

Thames Valley Police offers a range of potential opportunities for a rewarding and stimulating career.

Conditions of Service

All police staff are directly employed by the Police Authority, although under the day-to-day direction and control of the Chief Constable. Any changes to conditions of service, agreed as a result of legislation or local or national negotiations between the 'Authority' and UNISON, are incorporated into the terms and conditions and staff handbook.

Work Location

Some posts require the post holder to travel to different locations throughout the Force.

Please refer to the documentation provided by the HR Department to check if this is a requirement of the role for which you are applying.

Working Hours

The normal working week is 37 hours. Refreshment periods are not included in these hours. Normally, duties will be performed as described at the initial interview, in the offer letter and main terms and conditions of employment. As the police service has a 24 hour, seven day week commitment, there may occasionally be a need for an employee to work at times and places, other than normal, especially on such occasions as major crimes, disasters or special operations.

Holiday Entitlement

The annual leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December. The leave entitlement per year is as follows:

Salary Broad Band 1:

23 working days rising to 28 working days after 5 completed years' service

Salary Broad Bands 2 and 3:

24 working days rising to 29 working days after 5 completed years' service

Salary Broad Bands 4 and 5:

30 working days.

Employees receive pay for annual leave and public holidays.

Part time employees will receive annual leave and bank holidays on a pro-rata basis; these will be calculated in hours.

Employees starting or leaving employment during the year are entitled to leave proportionate to the number of completed months of service during the year.

Payment of Salaries

The Broad Band Pay Structure which operates within Thames Valley Police has five broad salary bands, each with a defined top and bottom range level. All jobs will be allocated to an appropriate pay reference point within these bands.

Each annual salary review (effective from 1 September) will be conducted in accordance with the Police Staff Reward policy/guidance, which will take account of market pay levels in the Thames Valley area and other relevant survey information including data on retention and from recruitment experience.

Thames Valley Police operate performance related pay linked to the Performance Development Review (PDR) process.

All Police Staff are paid by credit transfer to a bank or building society account.

Pensions and Superannuation Contributions

Any employee is eligible for membership to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). All employees are brought into the LGPS upon starting work (unless they opt out), except for casual employees, who are only brought in if they opt in. The contribution rate is 6% of pensionable remuneration and contributions will be deducted from the employee's salary. Thames Valley Police contribute a varying amount each year to ensure the Pension Fund is at 100%. Further details of benefits under this scheme may be obtained from the Force's pension advisers at Buckinghamshire County Council.

Health and Safety

It is the duty of all Thames Valley Police personnel, irrespective of rank, grade or position, to take reasonable care of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

All personnel have a duty to co-operate with the Force in order to ensure compliance with the health and safety policy statement and its implementation. No-one should intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything that has been provided for health and safety reasons.

Probation

The appointment of police staff to the service of Thames Valley Police will normally be subject to a period of probation not exceeding six months. For Trainee Police Enquiry Operators and Trainee Communication Officers the normal period of probation is nine months. During this period, the member of staff is expected to establish his/her suitability for the appointment. The probationary period may be extended where it is deemed necessary.

Training

Thames Valley Police is committed to providing its employees with learning opportunities e.g.

- "On the job" training
- Internal and external training courses
- Support for Study - up to 50% sponsorship may be awarded
- National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in Customer Services, Training and Development, and Administration.

Health and Welfare

Thames Valley Police provides the following benefits for employees:

Maternity Provisions, Adoption Leave, Compassionate Leave, Time off for Dependants, Paternity Leave, Parental Leave and flexible working where appropriate.

Welfare and Occupation Health

Thames Valley Police has a Welfare and Occupational Health unit providing a confidential service to all members of staff.

Health Scheme

A health scheme is available which is run through an external provider.

No Smoking Policy

Thames Valley Police operates a no-smoking policy in order to create a healthy and comfortable environment for all members of staff.

Sports and Social Club Membership

The Sports and Social Club arrange frequent events including theatre trips and other excursions. Members may also join the monthly Force Lottery which has various cash prizes. Gymnasiums are available at some Thames Valley Police sites.

Please see the Thames Valley Police website, www.thamesvalley.police.uk, for more information about Thames Valley Police.