

# Voluntary Transfer and Mobility Move Policy and Procedure

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**Alternative Formats**

This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

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# Voluntary Transfer and Mobility Move Policy

## 1 Policy Aim

- 1.1 The aim of this Policy and accompanying Procedure is to ensure that all employee Voluntary Transfer Requests and Mobility Moves are dealt with in a fair, equitable and transparent manner so that PBNI has the right people, in terms of qualification, competence, skills, ability, experience or potential, in the right place at the right time to meet organisational and business need.
- 1.2 As a public body, the primary responsibility must be to ensure the provision of services across the community, employee decisions will be made taking into account the circumstances of individual employees.

## 2 Objective

- 2.1 The objective of this Policy and accompanying Procedure is to provide an effective system for the appropriate and equitable deployment of PBNI employees in order to meet business need.

## 3 Scope

- 3.1 This Policy and Procedure is applicable to all employees in the roles noted in section 3.2.
- 3.2 Generally, these roles are in front line services, for example, probation roles including Assistant Director, Area Manager, Probation Officer, Community Service Officer, Probation Service Officer, Community Service Supervisor, and Administrative support roles, such as Administration Assistant, Administrative Officer, and Business Support Officer. *(This list of job roles is only indicative and may be expanded).*

#### **4. Definition of Voluntary Transfer and Mobility Move**

- 3.3 Employees in PBNI can move between location / team / function / role in PBNI in the following ways:
- a. As a result of an approved **Voluntary Transfer Request**. PBNI's Voluntary Transfer Scheme enables employees to put themselves forward for consideration of posts in between location / team / function / role.
  - b. Apply for any published vacancy.
  - c. As a result of a **Mobility Move** which occurs at the direction of the WPG who determine the most appropriate relocation of employees to suit business need, taking account of the personal circumstances of employees to be transferred.

#### **4 The Rationale for the Voluntary Transfer and Mobility Move Policy**

- 4.1 This Policy and accompanying Voluntary Transfer and Mobility Move Procedure (Procedure) have been developed to enable PBNI to ensure that its distribution of employees across all its operational functions in Northern Ireland, to support employees' development and wellbeing; and in order to meet organisational and business needs.
- 4.2 PBNI's employees make up across its functions and geographical areas is subject to fluctuation; and employees in some service areas will benefit from time limitations to their tenure in posts, in order that their wellbeing and professional development is supported.
- 4.3 The movement of employees between locations and / or types of work is an essential component in arrangements to ensure an appropriate and equitable allocation of staff with the right blend of skills and experience within teams to meet PBNI's responsibilities and to ensure that operational and business needs are met and that employees working in all intensive support environments are protected, and a Mobility Move will be considered after 3-6 years in post.
- 4.4 A Mobility Move, while directed by the organisation, should also be seen as an opportunity for employees to gain different experience and develop new skills in a range of practice / locations / functions for their own professional and career development.

4.5 It is therefore essential that employees, through their induction are aware that placement in their current between location / team / function / role is not finite (i.e., time limited) and they may be required to work at any location in Northern Ireland throughout the course of their career.

## **5 Organisational Reasons for Mobility Moves**

5.1 Where it is necessary to fill a vacancy under this policy, it may be due to one or more of the factors below:

- An increased workload in a particular location; or
- Employees absence leading to the need for temporary cover; or
- The need to rebalance skills, experience, and number of employees in posts across Northern Ireland.

5.2 The need to fill a vacancy by way of a Mobility Move will arise where it has not been possible to via the normal Voluntary Transfer List or where a recruitment internal or external trawl has been unsuccessful (or is likely to be unsuccessful) in filling the post.

5.3 Assistant Directors in consultation with Area Managers can decide to transfer employees 'internally' within individual team boundaries for operational reasons if required.

## **6 Responsibilities**

PBNI

6.1 PBNI has a responsibility as a public body to carry out its statutory and other functions to fulfil business needs. PBNI also has a duty of care towards its employees. This Policy and Procedure serves to provide development opportunities for employees in a variety of roles.

- 6.2 As a trauma informed organisation, PBNI understands that working in complex settings and with service users with complex needs, can have an impact on the emotional and physical wellbeing of the employees involved. We recognise therefore the importance of employees being able to move across teams and functions. Employees are asked to discuss their development during Supervision and Appraisal, and to put forward any requests for Voluntary Transfer which they would like considered.
- 6.3 Ideally employees would be able to move between location / team / function / role every 3 to 6 years for development purposes. Ideally any such moves would represent an opportunity for employees to develop their skills across a range of settings in PBNI.
- 6.4 Consideration will be given to the types of practice that employees in Probation roles are working in when moving between roles to enable development. Assistant Directors, in consultation with Area Managers, may move employees 'internally' within individual team boundaries for operational reasons if required.

### **Human Resources**

- 6.5 Human Resources (HR) will be responsible for reporting vacancies, maintaining a register of all Voluntary Transfer Requests, and providing reports detailing time in post for employees who have been in teams for over 3 years; and for ensuring the Workforce Planning Group (the WPG) have such information on a regular basis when the filling of vacancies is being considered.
- 6.6 When considering the filling of any vacancy by Voluntary Transfer or a Mobility Move, recommendations will be required from Assistant Directors / Line Managers to inform the WPG. HR will collate such information, provide advice in the decision-making process, record decisions and take follow up action to inform employees formally of any transfers.

## **7 Definition of Transfer**

- 7.1 Please note that a change of location / team / function / role is defined as a 'transfer' irrespective of whether this has been made via the Voluntary Transfer or Mobility Move Procedures. This does not include transfers as a result of a promotion.

- 7.2 Employees transferring will be compensated for any additional travel they are required to undertake additional from their home to any new location as a result of the Voluntary Transfer or Mobility Move in line with the Travel Allowance Policy.
- 7.3 Employees transferring should normally be at no financial detriment in terms of salary as a result of a Mobility Move, in relation to travel expenses.
- 7.4 Staff transferring on a voluntary basis may seek to do so to a post of a lower grade, or on less than their substantive hours, and would therefore be paid in accordance with the salary for the role and the contracted hours.
- 7.5 Employees' transfers will be permanent unless otherwise stated, and 'substantive' posts will not be held for a returning employee, unless the transfer is expressly stated as a temporary transfer, due to business need.

## **8 Policy implementation**

- 8.1 PBNI's management will make every effort to ensure the smooth transfer of employees between location / team / function / role as a result of the implementation of this policy. The Procedure sets out how the process for transfers should progress. Where, unfortunately dispute arises, despite best efforts to achieve a smooth transfer, the matter may have to be addressed through a formal policy, for example the Grievance Policy and Procedure, or any other appropriate policy and procedure.

## **9 Review**

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed 4 years from approval. Interim reviews may be prompted by feedback, and/or identified changes in practice.

# Voluntary Transfer and Mobility Move Procedure

## 1 Making the Decision to approve a Voluntary Transfer or a Mobility Move

1.1 On a regular basis, the WPG meet to consider staffing requirements and the filling of vacancies across PBNI. Prior to making decisions on the filling of vacancies, the following procedure will be followed:

- The Voluntary Transfer Request List will be used to assess if there are any requests to move that would enable a vacancy to be filled. There are circumstances whereby it will not be feasible to allow a Voluntary Transfer, where for example, there is a business need for a post holder to remain in post due to skills or experience.
- A public recruitment or internal Expression of Interest Trawl can be used to fill the post.
- If no one is identified via either of these methods, or is unlikely to be, then the WPG will identify individual employees for a Mobility Move. In considering any Mobility Move, WPG must consider the personal circumstances of each employee, their individual experience, length of time in current placement, the ideal skill mix and experience of current team, current caseload, service users and the needs of the service/business.

1.2 Assistant Directors, in consultation with Area Managers can decide to transfer employees 'internally' within individual team boundaries for operational reasons if required. The movement should be discussed with the Department Director but does not require WPG authorisation.

## 2 The Process

2.1 The WPG will consider resource planning. HR will retain an up-to-date Voluntary Transfer Requests List and provide reports on staffing across teams with detail of length of service in teams.



- 2.2 This information will be considered by the WPG when transfers need to be considered and / or when permanent vacancies need to be filled. If any other factors are known about an employee identified for a transfer (which would prohibit their move) these will be taken into account.
- 2.3 In the first instance Voluntary Transfer Requests will be explored and although circumstances can arise (for both service and personal reasons) it is desirable that transfers should normally take place on the basis of a predictable and planned cycle supported by appropriate training and preparation prior to each move.
- 2.4 WPG will review the Voluntary Transfer list when considering how to fill any vacancy.
- 2.5 Employees seeking a transfer should make a transfer request as per the Voluntary Transfer Procedures (see also Appendix 1: Voluntary Transfer Request Form). This will result in the request being added to the Voluntary Transfer list maintained by HR.

### **Employees**

- 2.6 Employees have responsibility for their own career development. While the outcome of appraisals will not be taken into account by WPG for Voluntary Transfers or Mobility Moves, Employees should discuss development aspirations with their managers during Supervision or Appraisal and managers should encourage their Employees to use the Voluntary Transfer process. Employees interested in transferring should make this request explicit by completing a Voluntary Transfer Request form.
- 2.7 Internal trawl notices will normally be issued where new vacancies arise within the organisation and it has not been possible to backfill via the Voluntary Transfer list.
- 2.8 Mobility Moves will normally be considered on the basis of longest serving in the current role, skills mix and/or the number of hours required of the post. Attention will be given to the skills mix and experience of the employee's current team before a decision is made on a Voluntary Transfer Request or Mobility Move, as organisational need will take priority.

- 2.9 WPG will endeavour to consider Mobility Moves at least 3 months before they are planned to occur in order to provide sufficient notification to employees. Where a vacancy needs to be filled urgently, a shorter notification timescale may be unavoidable.
- 2.10 When the WPG authorises a Mobility Move, the decisions will be provided to the Assistant Directors.
- 2.11 Assistant Directors should advise line managers of the planned transfers as soon as possible when outcomes from the WPG are known. In the case of Area Manager proposed transfers the Assistant Director (as direct line manager) should follow the process below.
- 2.12 Line managers should subsequently advise the employee of the proposed transfer and confirm this discussion has taken place with HR.
- 2.13 HR will write to the employee to formally advise them of the proposed Transfer / Mobility Move, indicating the proposed date of the move, if possible. If the employee then wishes to raise any concerns about the transfer at this point, this should be in writing to the HR Manager within 5 working days of receipt of the Transfer letter. Such concerns may be if any personal, welfare, health, or disability related issues are relevant in the decision making relating to the Transfer / Mobility Move.
- 2.14 If not already agreed at WPG, the Assistant Directors and Line Managers should liaise to agree suitable transfer dates and should then advise HR accordingly.
- 2.15 A further Transfer letter confirming the transfer date and providing information on excess mileage will be issued from HR. HR will endeavour to issue approximately one month prior to the transfer date. The new line manager should agree training and preparation plans as soon as practical.
- 2.16 Where an Assistant Director, in consultation with the Area Manager decides to transfer Employees 'internally' within individual team boundaries for operational reasons, the line manager will firstly inform the employee, advising him/her of the reasons for doing so. The Assistant Director will advise HR of this internal transfer confirming date of transfer.

2.17 HR will then issue a Transfer letter affirming the transfer date and providing information on excess mileage (if applicable). However, when WPG are considering Mobility Moves the internal transfer will have no impact on the 3-6 year cycle as the employee will be regarded as being in the same team irrespective of office location.

### **3 Probation roles**

#### **Probation Officers**

- 3.1 It should be the expectation of employees working in probation roles in particular, that Mobility Moves will take place throughout their career.
- 3.2 Employees should make their Line Manager aware via Supervision or Appraisal if they wish to be considered for a Mobility Move.
- 3.3 PBNI will make every effort also, to ensure that as part of its duty of care, to offer employees, in roles which are impacting or could potentially impact on their wellbeing, alternative roles, where this is feasible.
- 3.4 Where an employee is seeking to return to an intensive support setting this will not be permitted until there has been at least six month's break from this type of environment if it is operationally feasible.
- 3.5 When taking into account the circumstances of employees, those who are prevented from transferring to an intensive support setting either because of a current workplace adjustment / health / disability or personal / welfare circumstances, these can be reviewed again after a further 3-year period.

#### **Community Service Supervisors**

- 3.6 Community Service Supervisors will not normally be subject to the 3-to-6-year cycle however they may be employed in any post appropriate to their grade at such place of employment in PBNI's service as may be required. Community Service Supervisors may therefore be transferred under the Mobility Procedure if necessary.

### **Administrative and business support roles**

- 3.7 Administrative and business support roles may be assigned to a field team, prison setting or headquarters to work in support of service delivery. Administrative and business support roles will not be subject to the 3–6-year cycle but may be employed in any post appropriate to their grade at such place of employment in PBNI's service as may be required. They are expected to travel a reasonable travelling distance from home and may be transferred as required. This may include, for example:
- business reason relating to restructuring or reorganisation of teams or relocation of offices.
- 3.8 The WPG will consider when this is necessary, and the Voluntary Transfer and Mobility Move Procedure will be followed as appropriate.

## **4 Voluntary Transfer Procedures**

- 4.1 The employee interested in moving from their current role must complete a Voluntary Transfer Request Form (Appendix 1). This form should be signed by their line manager and submitted to the HR Department. A Voluntary Transfer list will be maintained by the HR Department and the request will be added to the transfer list in date order.
- 4.2 Employees requesting a transfer must state the PBNI office location, specialism, or general geographical area that they wish to transfer to.
- 4.3 HR will acknowledge receipt of the transfer request within 5 working days.
- 4.4 When a vacancy arises, the Voluntary Transfer list will be reviewed and the employee at the top of the register for the geographical location, specialism at which the vacancy exists will be considered by the WPG.
- 4.5 As part of the WPG decision making process the skill mix and experience in each team will need to be taken into consideration as well as the hours required of the vacant post, as organisational need will take priority. Employees should recognise therefore that for business needs, it will not always be possible to release employees for a transfer. In such circumstances, while they may be the first on the list for a particular location, it is not an absolute guarantee that he/she will be the next person to transfer to their desired location/area of work. The final decision will be authorised by the WPG.

- 4.6 Employees who are on the Voluntary Transfer list who subsequently learn of a colleague's transfer to their preferred location / area of work should understand that the above circumstances in paragraph 4.5, above will have been taken into consideration or the colleague may have been above him / her on the transfer list.
- 4.7 When the WPG authorises Voluntary Transfer Requests, the decisions will be provided to the Assistant Directors.
- 4.8 Assistant Directors should advise line managers that a Voluntary Transfer Request has been accepted by WPG as soon as possible when WPG outcomes are known. In the case of Area Managers, the Assistant Director (as direct line manager) should follow the process below.
- 4.9 Line managers should subsequently advise the employee that his / her Voluntary Transfer Request has been accepted by WPG and confirm this discussion has taken place with the relevant HR People Partner
- 4.10 HR will then write to the employee to confirm the offer of a Voluntary Transfer.
- 4.11 Acceptance of a Voluntary Transfer offer must be confirmed by the employee in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the offer.
- 4.12 Upon acceptance of a Voluntary Transfer offer, HR will obtain confirmation of the proposed transfer date from the Assistant Director. HR will send written notification to the employee confirming the date on which the transfer will take place and will provide information on excess mileage allowance, if applicable.
- 4.13 Where an employee declines a Voluntary Transfer offer, the request will be removed from the Voluntary Transfer list. Where an employee declines a Voluntary Transfer offer but wishes to stay on the Voluntary Transfer list, they must make a further request. In exceptional circumstances, mitigation for non-acceptance will be considered to keep a person who has refused a transfer on the transfer list; however, the current vacancy will be offered to the next person on the list. Such mitigation must be provided in writing to HR within 5 working days.

## **5 Transfers outside the normal mobility arrangements**

5.1 In certain circumstances to meet its obligations as a public service employer, PBNI may have to direct an employee to a particular function/location in cases where they have less than 3 years in their current role. This will not however apply to employees who have previously been located in intensive supervision role with a break of less than one year. Some examples of the reasons for employees moves are:

- An increased workload in a particular location
- Sickness leading to the need for temporary cover.
- The need to rebalance skills, experience, and number of employees in posts across Northern Ireland

5.2 The need to fill vacant posts which could not be filled via the normal Voluntary Transfer or Mobility Move arrangements or where a trawl notice has been unsuccessful in filling the post.

5.3 Where such a situation arises, HR will be involved to facilitate consultation with the employee and his/her representative (a trade union representative or colleague as nominated by the individual). In the course of such consultation PBNI shall provide in writing:

- The circumstances which make the move necessary (subject to respect for confidential information in regard to other employees).
- The alternative options which have been considered/explored to fill the post.
- The reasons why the individual employee concerned has been identified as the person to fill the post.

5.4 It should be the expectation of employees working in probation grades employees that Mobility Moves will take place throughout their career. Probation grades working in intensive support settings will be considered for a Mobility Move on average every 3-6 years.

## **6 Structures / Mechanisms**

6.1 The WPG will be the forum that will consider and authorise Voluntary Transfer Requests.

- 6.2 Voluntary Transfers will be considered prior to normal recruitment activities. Exceptional circumstances such as redeployment, disciplinary sanction or conflict resolution may take precedence over this policy.
- 6.3 The responsibilities placed on PBNI by employment legislation will be observed at all times and on occasions will take precedence over this policy.
- 6.4 Employees subject to live disciplinary warnings, or performance improvement plans are not eligible to apply for a transfer.
- 6.5 Employees cannot request a transfer within the first year of employment or within twelve months of moving posts as a result of a requested transfer.

## VOLUNTARY TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

**Full Name:**

**Current Location:**

Contact Number and email:

Location/Specialism requested:

Please give brief details of reasons for requesting a transfer:

I have read and understood the Probation Board for Northern Ireland Voluntary Transfer and Mobility Policy and Procedure and wish to request an internal transfer as outlined above.

Signature:           **Date:**

Line Manager Comments

**Signature :**           **Date:**

This form should be returned to HR.

humanresources@pbni-ni.gov.uk