



CPS Advocate Specialist Panel Scheme 2018 - 2022

## **CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE – SPECIALIST ADVOCATE PANEL SCHEME 2018 - 2022**

### **APPLICATION PROCESS – JANUARY 2018 WINDOW**

1. This document describes the process for advocates to join the CPS Specialist Advocate Panels.
2. All advocates applying to join the Panel must meet the selection criteria relevant to each of the five Specialist Panels.
3. All applicants appointed to the Panel must agree to abide by the Advocate Panel Members' Commitment.
4. Applicants who join will be appointed for the duration of the Panel. The 2018 Specialist Panel is expected to run for four years to 2022. CPS has discretion to amend the duration but will only do so in consultation with the Bar Council and Law Society.
5. Applications will not be accepted for applicants wishing to upgrade their level in January 2018. However, an annual application/upgrade window will be open in September each year. The CPS can hold the window at another period at its discretion.
6. Members of the 2013 Specialist Panels who do not accept an invite to join the 2018 Specialist Panel can make an application to re-join one or more of the Panels during the annual application window in September 2018, but the application cannot be at a level higher than their 2013 Panel level at the time of application.
7. The application process will be open and transparent and provide equal opportunity for all applicants. There will be no quotas in respect of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age or disability for candidates being appointed onto the Panel.

### **New Applications at Level 2, 3 or 4**

8. New applicants can apply to join the 2018 Specialist Panels at levels 2, 3 or 4 during the annual application window but can only make one application to join in a three year period.

### **Application Process**

9. Applicants may apply to join more than one Specialist Panel but must complete and submit a separate application form for each, relevant to the corresponding selection criteria. There are five Specialist Panels, as follows:
  - Counter Terrorism Panel – levels 3 and 4 only
  - Extradition Panel – levels 2, 3 and 4
  - Fraud Panel (including fiscal fraud) – level 2, 3 and 4
  - Proceeds of Crime Panel – levels 2, 3 and 4
  - Serious Crime Group Panel – levels 2, 3 and 4



## CPS Advocate Specialist Panel Scheme 2018 - 2022

10. Applicants must use the form containing the descriptor 'CPS Specialist Advocate Panel Scheme 2018 – 2022', selecting from the dropdown menu the Panel to which they are applying.
11. New applicants must determine for each application which level they wish to apply for and apply for one level only. The application will automatically be considered for the next level down if it is unsuccessful at the level they applied for.
12. Applicants must carefully consider which level to apply for based on their own assessment of their ability and experience.
13. Applicants should secure and submit references in accordance with the guidance below:
14. Level 2 applicants should provide two references with no more than one from a member of the full-time judiciary.
15. Level 3 applicants should provide two references with at least one from a member of the full-time judiciary.
16. Level 4 applicants should provide three references. At least one reference, but no more than two, should be from members of the full-time judiciary. Applicants with significant prosecuting experience should provide at least one reference from an instructing lawyer. However, if you have not undertaken a significant amount of prosecuting work and are unable to supply such a reference, this does not prevent you from applying.
17. Each applicant applying to join the Specialist Panels must submit, in electronic form only, an application form together with supporting material, where required, and the required number of completed references. A separate application form is required for each Specialist Panel. Applicants must also complete and submit an Equalities Monitoring Questionnaire.
18. Please note:
  - Some sections of the application form have word limits that must be observed.
  - Paper submissions are not acceptable.
  - Secure email addresses, such as the CJSM network ([www.cjsm.net](http://www.cjsm.net)), are desirable for the application process, although not essential. All successful applicants must sign-up to use secure email as a condition of being appointed to the Panel.
  - Applicants must carefully consider which Specialist Panel(s) and level to apply for in light of their assessment of their own ability and experience.



## CPS Advocate Specialist Panel Scheme 2018 - 2022

- Applicants should secure and submit references in accordance with the guidance, remembering that they must submit a separate application and references for each Panel (see points 14-16 above). The same reference may be submitted in support of more than one application provided it relates to the skills specified in the relevant selection criteria.
  - The Advocate Panel team will not contact referees to request or chase references on behalf of the applicant.
19. An instructing member of the CPS may compose a reference for an Advocate Panel applicant. However, any reference provided by an instructing member of the CPS will be considered an organisational reference, and not a personal one. The draft reference must be referred to either the local Area CCP, or someone delegated by the CCP, for approval. Applicants should confirm with the CPS member of staff that they have submitted the reference to the Advocate Panel mailbox with the appropriate approval.
20. The application form and all supporting documentation, including references, should be submitted in electronic form. Barrister applicants should quote their unique Bar reference number. References can be sent separately to the application but the applicant should provide the name of the person/s providing the reference.
21. Information for referees can be found in the Explanatory Note to Referees document.
22. Applications will be assessed on the content of the written application form, examples of work and written references. There will be no interview or other test as part of the assessment process.
23. It is important that applicants take time and care when completing their application form. In doing so, applicants should refer to all of the available guidance.

### **Pre-Qualification Questions**

24. All new applicants must answer pre-qualification questions as part of the application process.
25. The pre-qualification questions require new applicants to disclose details and dates of:
- criminal convictions or cautions recorded against them;
  - disciplinary findings found against them by their professional body or Regulator, and
  - instances where the CPS has had to formally remove instructions from them.
26. The pre-qualification questions also require disclosure of allegations which are pending resolution.



## CPS Advocate Specialist Panel Scheme 2018 - 2022

27. The CPS reserves the right not to accept or further consider applications where, in the view of the CPS, the CPS or other criminal justice participant would not have adequate confidence in the applicant's judgement or integrity if the applicant was appointed to the Panel, based on the answers to the pre-qualification questions or resulting enquiries. There is no right of appeal against such a decision.
28. In this respect the CPS will assess the level of confidence likely to be held in the applicant by;
- victims and witnesses
  - the general public
  - CPS
  - courts
  - other practitioners, and
  - the police
29. In assessing public confidence, the degree of media interest and notoriety arising from any incident or behaviour listed in the pre-qualification questionnaire will be taken into account.
30. In respect of the pre-qualification issues, including unresolved allegations, all factors will be considered including:
- nature and seriousness of the allegations;
  - the age of the allegations;
  - individual's age at time of allegation;
  - circumstances of victims;
  - level of sentence or potential sentence, and
  - appeal procedures.
31. If the application is accepted and proceeds to a full assessment, the answers to pre-qualification questions will play no part in the assessment of the application.

### **Equalities Monitoring**

32. To assist in monitoring the range of applicants applying for the Panel each new applicant should complete the equalities monitoring questionnaire. The information provided will be treated as confidential.
33. The information provided on the questionnaire will not form part of the assessment process. The data gathered will be anonymous and used for statistical purposes only and the questionnaire will be destroyed once analysis has been completed.