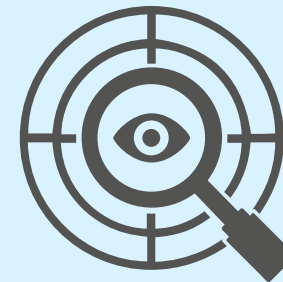
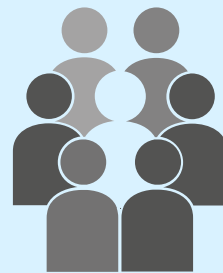
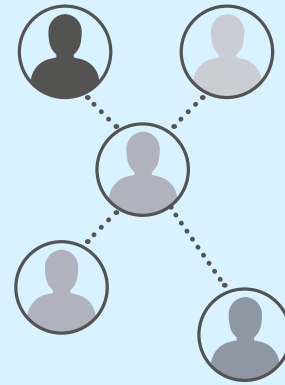


Recruitment guidance - candidate management



Summary

A summary of each section within the guidance. Click on the title of each section to find out more.

1. Why sift?

- Setting the scene: managing candidates in the early stages of a selection process (sifting) in the context of the 20k uplift and the introduction of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) new entry routes.
- The benefits of applying an effective process.



2. The guidance

- Why the guidance has been developed.
- Considering where sifting sits in the broader recruitment process.



7. Monitoring

- Good practice in your approach to monitoring and the benefits of an effective approach.
- Closing the loop: how monitoring will inform your recruitment strategy.



3. Strategy

- The importance of your force's recruitment strategy to effectively identify, attract and secure a professional police service.
- The benefits of having a clear recruitment strategy.
- What should feature in your force's recruitment strategy.
- Best practice in attraction - attraction toolkit.



6. Diversity, fairness and adverse impact

- Links to the College of Policing's Positive Action guide for police recruitment to assist in creating equality of opportunity and address barriers that prevent people from achieving their potential.
- Candidate support to help candidates do their best and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- Adverse impact in your selection process and striking the balance between minimising adverse impact, maximising predictive job performance, minimising cost and ensuring a positive candidate experience.
- The use of cut-scores and important factors to consider when applying different standards.



5. Assessing selection criteria

- Being clear on how to measure the eligibility and job criteria to get the most value from candidate places at the National Assessment Process.
- What assessing eligibility criteria looks like for the different entry routes into policing.
- Principles of assessing job criteria: relevant measure of the role, strong predictor of future performance, minimising adverse impact, cost effective, legally defensible, positive candidate experience and time efficient.
- Benefits and drawbacks of different selection methods based on the best available evidence. Sharing of practice from across the service.



4. Setting selection criteria

- Being clear about what to measure. Setting eligibility criteria for the different entry routes into policing.
- Setting job criteria: the importance of setting relevant criteria in terms of the behaviours and values required to effectively perform the role in addition to skills and experience.
- Learning provider collaboration and the importance of early involvement in the recruitment process.
- Links to Regulation 10: a list of qualification levels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; guidance on recognition of prior learning and apprenticeship funding rules for main providers.





1. Why sift?

The quality of the police service relies on the quality of the people you attract and appoint. People are the most expensive asset, so employing the right selection process is essential to make the most efficient use of money, time and resources. It is also vital in securing a professional police service that can meet current and future policing demands.

The introduction of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) includes three new entry routes for the rank of police constable in addition to the extended use of the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP)¹. With the government's commitment to increasing the number of police officers by 20,000 over three years, getting recruitment right is more important than ever.

Applying an effective process to manage candidates during the early stages of the selection process can help to achieve the following benefits:

- reduce the likelihood of selecting individuals who have little chance of performing effectively in the role or pass the National Assessment Process²
- get better value from candidate places at National Assessment Process
- aim to minimise or eliminate disproportionality in outcomes for underrepresented groups
- maximise candidates' potential by properly supporting them, ensuring a positive candidate experience and enhancing the reputation of your force

1 Forces will be able to start new entrants up to the end of June 2021 and continue to use the programme for the two-year probation period of those new entrants only. Starts between July 2021 and June 2022 will be by exception only. All starts from July 2022 onwards must be via one of the new initial entry routes.

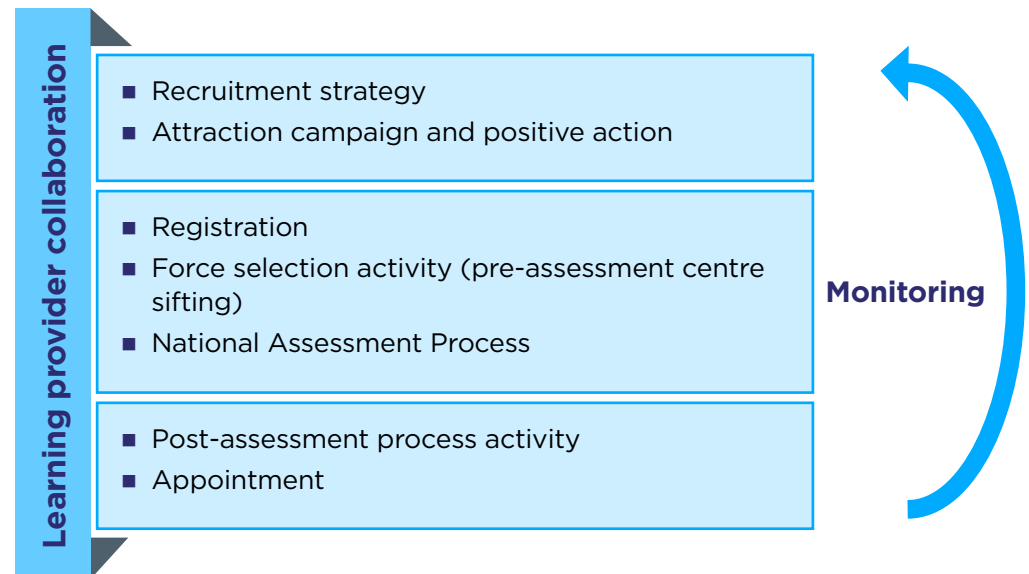
2 The Online Assessment Process is currently in place as the interim selection solution for police officer selection.

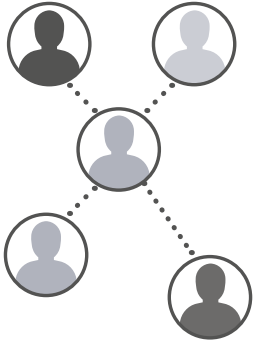


2. The guidance

Not all forces manage their candidates in the same way during the early stages of initial police recruitment. This results in a large variance in time and cost per candidate from application to appointment. Work is in progress to consider a national ‘sifting’ solution that aims to benefit forces in effectively managing candidates during the early stages of the selection process. In the absence of a national solution, this guidance aims to support forces in considering some of the key principles of an effective end-to-end recruitment process. The guidance also seeks to share effective practice from across the police service and present the best available evidence.

Any selection activity, whether prior to or after the National Assessment Process, needs to be considered in the context of the broader recruitment process, as each stage is critically dependent on the other. Collaboration with learning providers for forces who have transitioned to the PEQF is an integral part of the process (see section **4.1.1 Learning provider collaboration**). Monitoring plays a crucial part in informing each stage of the process and this is explored in further detail later in the guidance.





3. Strategy

Your force's recruitment strategy is vitally important, especially in the context of an unprecedented uplift in the recruitment of police officers over three years. The recruitment strategy is key to setting out and delivering your organisation's intentions to effectively identify, attract and secure a professional police service and should be developed as part of wider workforce planning.

Benefits of a clear recruitment strategy include the opportunity to:

- Articulate the link between your force priorities and how recruitment will help to deliver on these, so that it is seen as a core part of overall force business.
- Outline the scale of the challenge and opportunities (informed by baseline data, which includes diversity data) to key decision-makers across your force so they can be clear on the resources, funding and time needed to deliver.
- Clearly and transparently document the intended approaches to addressing the challenge so this can later be shared with current officers and staff.

- Explain the measurable criteria for progress and success, and how monitoring and evaluation practices will ensure fully informed decisions and continuous improvement.
- Create a governance structure through which barriers can be addressed and outcomes scrutinised and monitored.

As a minimum, your strategy should look to set out:

- Background (introduce context and key drivers for the need to focus in on recruitment – link to workforce plan).
- High level aims and objectives (what you seek to achieve and why).
- Scope (what is and is not within the scope of the recruitment work and why).

- Resource requirement and roles/responsibilities (who you need to deliver the work and what they will do).
- Funding requirement (what level of funding you might need and where this could come from).
- Success measures/key performance indicators (how will success and progress be measured and how often).
- Stakeholders (any wider teams, organisations and services you need to work with and how often).
- Delivery plan (set out specific activities with description, timescales, responsible owners and success measures).
- Risks (outline any risks you foresee being part of the recruitment work).

3.1 Attraction

Attraction is the first part in the process of recruitment. At this initial stage, you identify the people you want to potentially apply for your roles, where those people might be reached and then undertake the work to reach out to them. The national police attraction campaign, launched on 5 September 2019, aimed to raise interest in joining the police and encourage people to apply. The national work was introduced to support and complement local work and should work in unison with your local level strategy.

As with any recruitment campaign, attracting the very best applicants is key to the effectiveness of your selection process and should result in:

- sufficient volume, quality and diversity of candidates who are enthused about the role
- effectively managing candidates' expectations about the requirements of the role and the process they need to undertake to get there.

The College of Policing **attraction and outreach handbook** provides insights and advice on successful approaches.

A **summary** is shown overleaf.

The College of Policing, Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) have worked in partnership to develop an attraction and outreach hub. The work builds on and incorporates previous separate toolkits and documents (eg, the attraction toolkit, workforce representation toolkit) to provide a one-stop shop for advice and support. This hub aims to support the service to generate sufficient volume, quality and diversity of candidates to achieve the uplift through effective national and local communication strategies including advertising, engagement and local outreach. The work was shared with forces in May 2020 and consists of a handbook, workshops and a dedicated Knowledge Hub group.

To find out more about this, email joiningthepolice@homeoffice.gov.uk

Attraction summary

Here are some of the main steps you could consider to take a proactive approach to attraction and promoting your force's jobs and opportunities.

Research and analysis

- Know your position in the job market. Do people know if (and crucially when) they can apply for jobs within your force? Do they know the range of opportunities on offer? Is your force seen as an attractive employer? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Collate and analyse data from previous application rounds. Are there common themes in applicants? Are there gaps that need addressing? How does your local picture compare to the national one?
- Run focus groups or drop-in sessions with your local communities, or set up online surveys or forums to ask people if they would apply to your force and why.



Define your brand and offer

- Use your research to tailor your brand and job offers to the market. Be clear about who you are, what you do, what your values and culture are, and the range of opportunities available. What makes your force and local area unique?
- As part of defining the jobs and opportunities on offer, describe the progression and career development opportunities in the short, medium and long term.
- Clearly outline your equality, diversity and inclusion approach. If you have diversity awards or similar, make them clear and part of the advertisement.
- Ensure job adverts have all relevant details in a clear and simple format.
- Consider video job adverts and descriptions if you want to take a more innovative approach.



Social media and websites

- Make sure your online presence is up to date, inviting, full of information and easy to navigate. Test it out before you drive people there.
- Make use of online platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and the College of Policing website.
- Share videos/testimonials from current staff on your website and social media promoting what it's like to work at your force.



Measuring success

- To ensure that your attraction approach continually improves, measure the success rate (ie, conversion to actual applications) of your activities.
- Include a question(s) on the application about where applicants found out about the opportunity.
- Track clicks and conversions from your websites and social media to your application platform.



Taking positive action

- Be clear in job adverts, social media and on your website about how your force values and supports difference, and creates an inclusive culture.
- Use case studies of staff/officers within your force from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensure your marketing images and materials clearly show diversity.
- Outline how equality, diversity, inclusivity and fairness will be a key part of every day working life in your force.
- Outline any positive action your force is taking/will take to support under-represented groups. For example, this might be a list of positive action events in the local areas.



Outreach and events

- Attend local and national jobs fairs.
- Run a 'Meet the force' event or open day, either on your own or with other forces or emergency services who are looking to recruit. You could also run these virtually for those who can't attend in person.
- Link up with local schools, colleges and universities for them to promote your force as an employer.
- Join up to the College of Policing jobs virtual event for free and / or consider running your own virtual events.
- Are there companies or organisations making redundancies in your locality? Can you forge partnerships with them to offer their leavers new possibilities?





4. Setting selection criteria

4.1 Setting eligibility criteria

The **Eligibility criteria for the role of police constable 2020** provides guidance on eligibility for recruitment into the police service for all entry routes.

The PEQF entry routes are set out below, including the entry requirements. To prevent risk to the public and policing, it will not be possible to extend use of IPLDP for new entrants beyond June 2022 **and will by exception only after June 2021**. The entry requirements are important to consider in relation to how they are assessed, which is discussed later in the guidance.

	IPLDP³ Initial Police Learning and Development Programme	PCDA Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship	DHEP Degree Holder Entry Programme	Pre-Join Degree Degree in Professional Policing
Minimum entry requirements to apply to join the police	Level 3 qualification (or equivalent)	Level 3 qualification (or equivalent) Functional/Essential skills (Level 2) are required prior to completion of the programme	Level 6 degree qualification, other than Degree in Professional Policing	Prior to applying to join the police service, a knowledge-based Level 6 Degree in Professional Policing must be achieved
The programme (once in service)	Two-year work-based entry programme	Three-year work-based professional degree apprenticeship, to enable new recruits to join the police service as an apprentice police constable, delivered in collaboration with the learning provider	Two-year practice-based entry programme, delivered in collaboration with the learning provider	After joining the police service: application of policing skills in the operational workplace, demonstrating competence across all operational policing areas
Probationary period	Two years	Three years	Two years	Two years
Qualification achieved	Level 3 Diploma in Policing	Level 6 Degree in Professional Policing Practice	Level 6 Diploma in Professional Policing Practice	Level 6 Degree in Professional Policing is achieved prior to joining the police service

*Regulation 10 of the Police Regulations sets out the qualifications and types of experience from which a chief officer may select as part of the process of recruitment into the police service. The Police Regulations 2003 will be amended to provide for only PEQF initial entry routes into policing at the rank of police constable from 01 July 2022. The IPLDP will be 'closed' as a recognised entry route into policing after this date.

*A list of qualifications levels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found [here](#).

³ Level 3 qualification, within the meaning of section 3 of the **Education and Skills Act 2008**.

Forces will be able to start new entrants up to the end of June 2021 and continue to use the programme for the two-year probation period of those new entrants only. Starts between July 2021 and June 2022 will be by exception only. All starts from July 2022 onwards must be via one of the new initial entry routes.

4.1.1 Learning provider collaboration

Involvement of learning provider training partners in the early stages of the recruitment process can help to identify a number of specific areas:

- assessment of academic potential and any support needs
- suitability of candidates for the different entry routes, depending on their previous academic achievements
- recognition of prior learning (RPL) - which has critical importance to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules for further education provision (applies to English forces only)
 - RPL guidance is available to assist the service and its educational partners to take advantage of the opportunities of RPL with a specific focus on the context of entry into the service as a police constable from police community support officer (PCSO) and special constable roles. Following the introduction of the PEQF, the College, by means of this guidance, aims to provide pathways for education providers to

establish clear and unambiguous RPL opportunities for the service to meet its police constable recruitment and educational needs.

- identifying those candidates who may require a 'step up to higher education' course prior to starting their formal learning

There are a number of ways learning providers can be involved in the process:

- assessment of personal statements
- training needs assessment pre- or post-interview
- participation in a collaborative interview either in person or by providing suitable questions

Onboarding events, hosted jointly by force and learning providers, prior to start dates, have proven useful in some forces to manage expectations and introduce candidates to the learning environment. Learning provider collaboration (and any involvement in the recruitment process) should be considered as part of the initial recruitment strategy to ensure the end-to-end process is as efficient as possible, avoiding unnecessary delays.

Useful documents:

Apprenticeship funding rules for main providers

Recognition of Prior Experience and Learning (RPL)

The two documents below are available on the PEQF section on the MLE:

IPLDP – PEQF: PC initial entry routes transition guidance

Recognition of prior learning guidance: PEQF initial entry and IPLDP-based programmes

For further information about PEQF, please see the College of Policing [website](#) or contact: PolicingEQF@college.pnn.police.uk

4.2 Setting job criteria

The Policing Professional Profile for **police constable** includes details of the role purpose, accountabilities, behaviours (competency and values framework or CVF), education and qualifications, skills and experience required to effectively perform in the role. The requirements of the role, as set out in the profile, provide the criteria against which to assess candidates for suitability for the role.

When making decisions about what to assess, consideration must be given to the importance of competencies and values as well as skills, knowledge and experience required to do the job effectively. Competencies and values build up a comprehensive picture of how the role should be carried out in behavioural terms. Some forces will have developed and established their own frameworks to reflect local context and variation. Any such frameworks will need to take into account that the CVF sets out nationally recognised behaviours and values, and provides a consistent foundation for the assessment of those applying to join the police, so will need to be applied in conjunction with any local requirements. The decision about what to assess (defined as core criteria) is important,

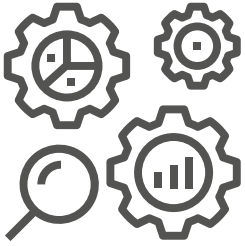
as a candidate's progression through the selection process will depend on the assessment of this criteria and will have an impact on the later stages of selection.

An example of setting eligibility and job criteria for a force may include:

- Eligibility criteria for the role of police constable (including age, convictions and financial considerations).
- Qualifications required for that entry route (eg, a Level 3 qualification, within the meaning of section 3 of the Education and Skills Act 2008) – provides indication of ability to manage the demands of the programme and the rigours of the role.
- Potential to perform the role and pass the National Assessment

Process based on the behaviours and values that underpin the role of police constable. This includes ability to consider issues critically in decision making, treating people respectfully regardless of circumstances, demonstrating a clear communication style and taking responsibility for their actions.

How to assess the criteria, making sure you reduce the chances of selecting people with little chance of performing effectively in the role and passing the Assessment Centre Process, is discussed in **section 5**.



5. Assessing selection criteria

The more successful the attraction strategy, the higher the volume of potential candidates and the greater the need for effective management of those candidates before they reach the National Assessment Process, which is the later, more costly stage of the selection process.

Getting the most value from candidate places at the National Assessment Process is essential, and your force's approach to managing candidates during the early stages of the selection process plays a crucial role in that.

Broad, relevant criteria about general suitability for the role (eligibility criteria) should be applied and assessed in the early stages of the selection process where the likelihood is that candidate numbers will be larger. The accuracy of the measurement of criteria at this stage is critical, especially as candidates will be deselected on the basis of the assessment, potentially in large numbers. The cost of early stage selection tools is a critical factor in considering whether they can be realistically applied or not. Candidate numbers will influence the price per candidate of any chosen approach. For example, an expensive tool applied to a large volume may be unsustainable. Ensuring the cost

of an approach is proportionate to the volumes of candidates it is able to deselect is essential in realising cost benefits later in the process at the National Assessment Process.

Specific, relevant criteria for the role (competencies/values) should be applied and assessed in the later stages of the selection process where the process is more time, cost and resource intensive.

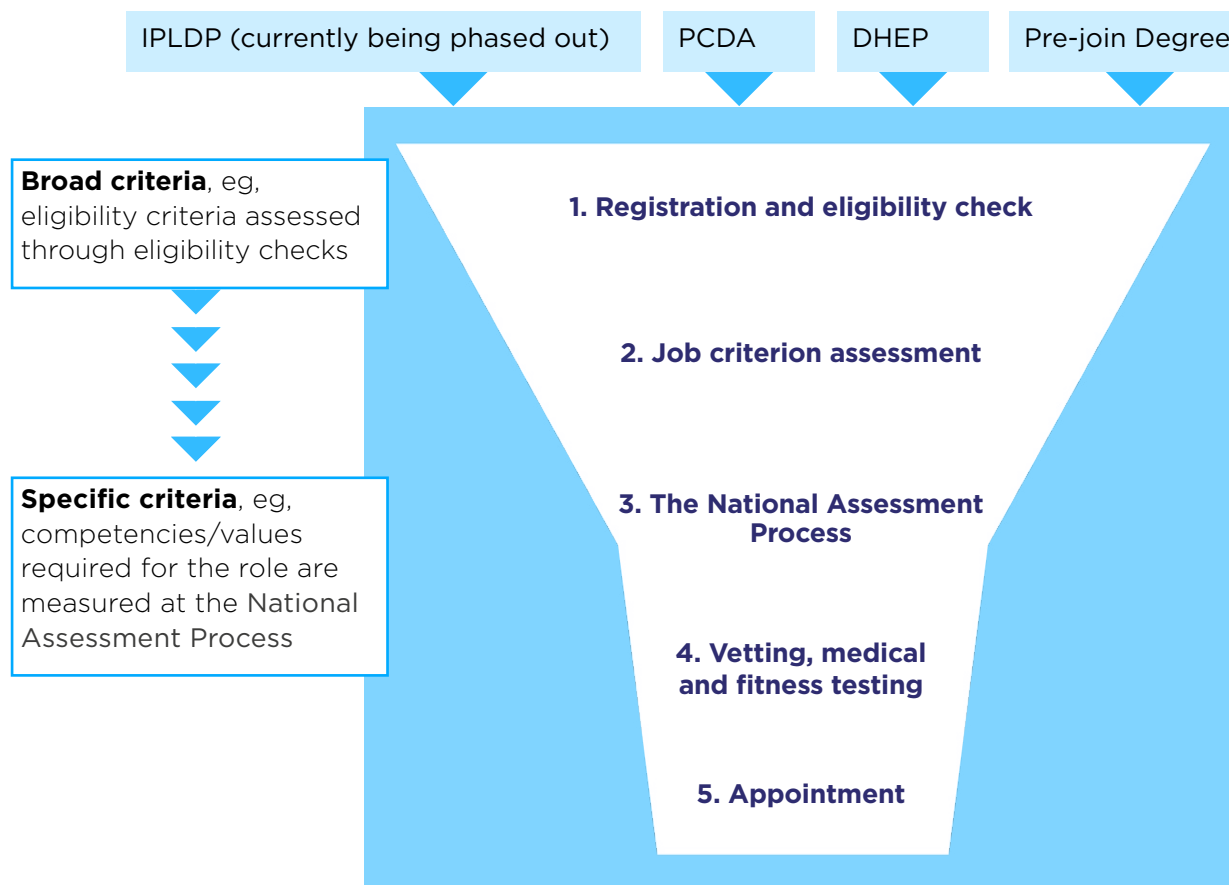
All candidates applying to be police officers will be required to successfully pass the National Assessment Process, regardless of entry route. The National Assessment Process is rigorous. Standardised processes involving the observation of candidates' performance across a variety of exercises are designed to assess their potential to perform effectively in the role of police constable. The National Assessment Process assesses candidates' performance in exercises against Level 1 of the CVF for Policing.

The diagram in **Figure 1** presents an example of how the criteria should be applied and assessed in an effective selection process.

It is important to consider how many people are required to be in post from each recruitment process to contribute towards meeting the uplift (link back to workforce planning and the recruitment strategy). The success of the attraction campaign will influence the numbers entering the selection process. The numbers must be considered against known pass rates at the National Assessment Process (average pass rates are currently 73%) and the percentage of candidates deselected at each earlier stage of the process (monitoring plays a crucial role in this). This will help in knowing the number of people your force needs to attract and will help inform decisions around managing them at each stage, including whether a sift is necessary at all.

Figure 1: Funnelling assessment criteria

Attraction – including the use of **realistic job previews** (to assist potential applicants in making an informed decision about the role) and setting clear expectations about the selection process (reduce chances of drop-out, especially during later stages of the process, ie, fitness test). The quality of the applicants entering the process relies on the effectiveness of the attraction strategy.



Realistic job previews

Pre-application practices that aim to assist applicants to make an informed decision about whether the role/organisation is right for them. RJPs are commonly used as part of the attraction process to assist potential applicants in considering their suitability for the role. Common approaches to presenting a RJP include: Online/social media videos, online/hard-copy brochures, information about the realities of the role including the benefits, demands and challenges, presented at open events by role holders, access to the organisation including shadowing opportunities.

However, they serve a dual purpose as a method to manage applicant numbers, as people will deselect themselves out of the process if they feel the role, or timing of applying for the role is not right for them, often through the use of a self-selection questionnaire.

Selection methods that have high relevance to the role also act as a realistic job preview. eg, Situational Judgement Tests (for more information see the different selection methods considered below).

Click on the title of each section to find out more.

1. Registration and eligibility check

- Assess criteria as set out in the **Eligibility criteria for the role of police constable** (ie, age and convictions).
- Assess qualifications requirement, including any assessment of test for Level 3 equivalence.
- Assess any additional criteria specific to your force's requirements and critical for the deselection of applicants, ie, motivation for applying.
- Must be time and cost effective to manage candidate volume, for example use of online eligibility checks linked to an Applicant Tracking System.

2. Job criterion assessment

- Assessment of role requirements using a selection method (or combination of methods).
- Must be a measure of relevant criteria for the role, a good predictor of future performance, low adverse impact, positive candidate experience, time and cost effective.

3. The National Assessment Process

- Assessment of specific, relevant criteria (competencies and values) through work-sample exercises that are directly relevant to the requirements of the role.
- Higher cost per candidate, placing greater importance on getting stages 1 and 2 right.
- Any post Assessment Process activity (ie in-force interview) should assess specific, relevant criteria directly relevant to the role. More information can be found **here**.

4. Vetting, medical and fitness testing

- The majority of candidates successful at the National Assessment Process should continue through the vetting, medical and fitness stage with low attrition rates.

5. Appointment

- Realise value for money from the selection process with those identified as most suitable to perform the role.

The decision about which methods to include in the process can be informed by considering the best available evidence and some of the good practice from across the police service, which is explored in more detail in **section 5.2**.

5.1 Assessing eligibility

The table below presents how the more broad eligibility criteria apply to each of the initial entry routes as outlined in **section 4.1** above, and some important considerations, specifically in relation to assessing that criteria for the PCDA entry route.

	IPLDP Initial Police Learning and Development Programme	PCDA Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship	DHEP Degree Holder Entry Programme	Pre-Join Degree Degree in Professional Policing
Assessing eligibility		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Eligibility checks that include qualification requirements at the start of the selection process will identify those who do not meet the regulatory requirements for entry for a specific entry route. In the absence of a level 3 qualification (or equivalent), some forces use ability tests as a way of demonstrating equivalence and assessing aptitude for future study. ■ Some forces have reported that this process assists in managing candidate numbers without the need for further selection methods prior to the Assessment Centre. This is heavily determined by the volume of candidates applying. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working with learning providers to determine Level 3 equivalence early in the process is essential in ensuring the expectations from both partners are clear. ■ Functional/Essential skills (Level 2) is not required as a prerequisite for entry, but are required prior to completion of the programme. The assessments included in the National Assessment Process are designed to be comparable to (and no higher than) the same level of ability as Functional/Essential skills (Level 2). However, some forces are setting this as a criterion, to ensure candidates who stand little chance of passing National Assessment Process, or meeting the end-point assessment on the programme, are sifted out in the earlier stages of the process. 		

The College, working with police service stakeholders and representatives from further and higher education, has developed a standardised national specification for widening access to higher education programmes. This is being implemented during 2020/21.

The purpose of this initiative is to assist the service to attract the best talent from the widest possible pool reflecting the demographics of the communities served. Widening access programmes can function as an essential component

within attraction strategies for a range of policing roles. They can prepare individuals for policing-related study, and for entry into the service or other associated professions (e.g. other law enforcement organisations). Irrespective of the motivations for going on the programme, for some candidates, particularly those without a Level 3 qualification, this will represent the best opportunity to enter the service.

The specification details requirements for: qualifications at Level 3; Functional

Skills (and equivalents) in English and Maths; study skills and numerical comprehension; policing specific inputs including support for candidates joining the service.

Properly managing candidates' expectations and ensuring your process is legally defensible relies on you being clear with candidates from the outset about any additional/different stages of the selection process that your force requires them to complete (ie, an ability test for Level 3 equivalence).

5.2 Assessing job criteria: identifying assessment solutions

There are some important principles around identifying the most effective selection method, following initial assessment of eligibility.

These include consideration of the following about your chosen approach:

- relevant measure of the job criteria being set
- strong predictor of job performance
- minimise adverse impact
- cost effective
- legally defensible

- positive candidate experience
- length of time added to the process

The aim here is not to specify or promote any one approach. There will be reasons why tools and techniques are used in some instances but not others and each has benefits and drawbacks. Just because a tool may have drawbacks, it does not mean that it may not still be appropriate to use

in the right situation in the context of your force. Choosing the most effective approach is a matter of balancing the benefits and drawbacks with your force's overall intentions in the recruitment strategy.

Application forms

Predictor of job performance	Limited evidence
Adverse impact	Some evidence of assessor bias
Cost	Unknown
Candidate experience	No evidence

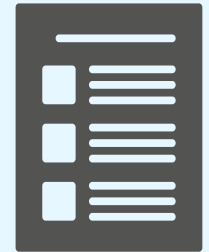
Application forms are the single most common selection tool. They are used by almost every organisation. They vary in their use, from a method to capture applicant personal information to evidence of eligibility and job-relevant criteria, which can be assessed against the requirements of the role.

They can serve one of two purposes in deselection: applicants may choose to deselect themselves at the application stage by not proceeding or they are deselected once the form has been assessed. Application forms act as confirmation of applicant eligibility and assess whether there is sufficient evidence against set criteria (eg, skills, experience and knowledge) or competencies.

While the research is limited on their effectiveness or applicant reactions, there is evidence that assessors make unconscious assumptions about applicants based on little information (eg, names and addresses). To reduce the chances of bias affecting the assessment of application forms, applications should be anonymised.

Did you know?

It is increasingly common for police forces to have application forms integrated into their Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). 24 forces across the police service are using the same ATS. An ATS helps to automatically capture the correct data that supports selection process monitoring. Some have automated the assessment of eligibility and assist in directing applicants to different entry routes depending on their prior learning and experience.



Did you know?

The College of Policing is developing an assessment information management system (AIMS) that supports the management of candidates through the National Assessment Process. It enables the storage, management and reporting of candidate information and automates some of the existing administrative processes associated with the management of candidates through the assessment process.

4 Schmidt & Hunter, 1998 The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Psychology: Practical and Theoretical Implications of 85 Years of Research Findings. Psychological Bulletin, Vol 124(2) pp 262-274.

Cognitive ability tests

Predictor of job performance	Very good
Adverse impact	High
Cost	Low
Candidate experience	Somewhat favourable

Cognitive ability tests are commonly verbal, numerical and non-verbal (measuring thinking with shape and space).

Cognitive ability testing results in some of the highest predictors of job performance, but they also produce high levels of adverse impact.

Ways to manage the potential for adverse impact include: ensuring the test is highly relevant to the role (based on role requirements) and taking additional steps to attract target groups. It is important that this is focused, not just getting a high number of people from a particular target group, but that their ability level is likely to be within the range of ability required for the role. The risk of not striking this balance is people will be set up to fail.

The tests are generally administered online and so they are an efficient tool when there is a high volume of candidates.

Monitoring is essential in evidencing the effectiveness of the tests in predicting job performance.

Did you know?

Some police forces use ability testing at the early stages of the selection process. It is important to take great care to manage potential adverse impact or stereotype threat. Some ability tests are being used to determine equivalence to Level 3 qualifications as per the requirement under Regulation 10.



Stereotype threat refers to when people are worried about confirming a group stereotype about how members of that particular group (in respect of gender, ethnicity, age) tend to perform on certain types of tests. The more an individual's biographical differences are brought to their attention, the more likely these are to affect performance. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) recommends that personal biographical data is collected at the end rather than the beginning of an assessment to reduce this priming effect.

Personality measures

Predictor of job performance	Poor to moderate
Adverse impact	Low
Cost	Low
Candidate experience	Less favourable

Measures of underlying personal preference through self-report, as an indication of suitability to the requirements of the role.

Personality measures tend to be less common in large-scale recruitment despite being relatively low in cost and easy to administer online. The less favourable applicant reactions may be due to the difficulty in seeing the relevance of the tool for the requirements of the role. This can be addressed through communication with applicants to increase their understanding of the relevance of the measure. While the effectiveness is low to moderate, it can be improved by only using aspects of personality which are consistently required for the role (and not using any unrelated personality factors).

Where personality measures are used, consideration must be made to ensure that the results are validated against other sources of information, including an interview with a practitioner who is qualified to interpret the particular personality measure. The completion of personality assessments, including validation interviews, can be useful for candidates' self-reflection in considering their typical behaviour in relation to their suitability against the requirements and demands of the role.

Did you know?

Police forces use personality measures, but this tends to be in specialist role selection rather than initial recruitment. However, there is a resurgence in the popularity of personality screening, with organisations such as Marks & Spencer and PricewaterhouseCoopers using it in managing applicant volumes.



Situational judgement tests (SJTs)

Predictor of job performance	Moderate
Adverse impact	Moderate
Cost	Variable (depending on off-the-shelf or bespoke design)
Candidate experience	Favourable

SJTs are assessments of decision making, requiring candidates to rate the effectiveness of a series of responses to realistic work-related scenarios.

SJTs are likely to be more appropriate for roles where a large part of the job is about exercising judgement, making independent decisions, and balancing demands. From this it is easy to see why they would be relevant to roles in policing. Applicants accept the relevance of decision making as a requirement of the role, which is why they accept SJTs as being a relevant test.

SJTs are often used at early stages of selection to deselect the least suitable (eg, often the lowest 30% of applicants) rather than select the more suited.

The reported adverse impact can be carefully managed by providing supporting materials/events about what effective decision making looks like in the role. This will help people with less experience of the role to consider how they might make decisions in that role. Presenting the tool as an opportunity to demonstrate decision making relevant to the role, rather than as a 'test', may help reduce stereotype threat. If the experience of the police is varied across different communities, additional effort should be made to create opportunities to have engagement with officers and staff within your force.

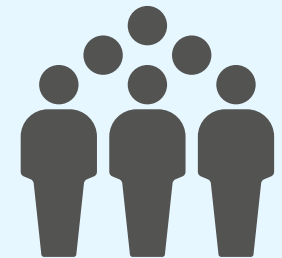
Absolute cost can only be evaluated by reviewing how well the tool helps manage volumes, which is why monitoring outcomes is essential.

Did you know?

The use of SJTs is relatively popular across a number of police forces, mainly through bespoke solutions from external providers. It seems to be a preferred method of reducing candidate volumes at early stages of the initial police recruitment process. The College of Policing are providing a short SJT as part of the Online Assessment Process, the interim solution for police officer selection.

Some forces have moved from a text-based SJT to a video version, which has been specifically developed by an external provider to fit with the organisational need.

Some forces are using the SJT in combination with a behavioural styles questionnaire which considers candidates' typical behaviours and the values they emphasise at work. Candidates must rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a number of statements about their working style. If the same rating is given to several statements, they are also asked to rank-order them.



Interview

Predictor of job performance	Very good (structured interview) Moderate (unstructured interview)
Adverse impact	Low to moderate
Cost	High (based on resource cost per candidate)
Candidate experience	Favourable

Interviews rarely feature as part of the early stages of recruiting where high volumes of applicants need to be managed, due to the time and resources required to conduct the interviews. They remain popular in the later stages of recruiting, with a large number of forces using them as an additional stage prior to or after candidate attendance at the National Assessment Process. Some exceptions include where forces have implemented practices to create a more direct route for those who are already special constables or PCSOs.

Where an in-force interview is applied post-assessment process, it is important to consider the rationale for this and what criteria is being used to assess candidates at this stage.

Consideration must be given as to whether it is assessing anything different to what is assessed through the National Assessment Process structured interview and the rest of the National Assessment Process. If candidates are being deselected at this stage, it is essential to monitor the attrition rate as well as the reasons (which should in turn inform decisions about what to assess during the earlier stages of the process). For example, if motivation for applying is a critical question for a particular force, consider how this can be measured during the earlier, more cost-effective stages of the process.

Post assessment force interview guidance is available [here](#) to support forces who choose to apply an in-force interview after the National Assessment Process.

Remote Interviews

Telephone and online interviewing practices are used by some organisations at earlier stages of the selection process.

The use of remote and virtual interviewing has increased in other industries as part of multi-stage interviews. While remote and virtual interviews lose the opportunity for the individual to visit the organisation, they do have some benefits too.

These tend to add convenience for interviewers and applicants and add flexibility during times where face to face interviews may not be possible or difficult to do. They can also help to keep costs down.



Multiple mini-interviews have proved popular with candidates and assessors who rate them highly on fairness, accuracy and experience. Candidates complete a number of short independent assessments. They present a much more cost-effective solution and are more reliable than traditional interviews.

The ability for the selected method to assess the core criteria, including competencies and values, relevant to the role, is an important consideration. It should underpin any decision around which selection method, or combination of methods, are chosen to meet your force's recruitment needs (as discussed in **section 5**). Careful 'mapping' needs to be carried out to ensure the tool is measuring the behaviours and values as set out in the competency framework.

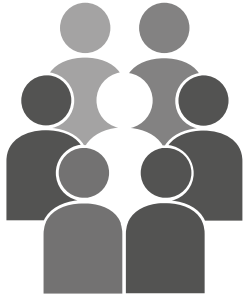
5.2.1 Key questions to ask about your chosen solution

With any selection solutions provided to your force, always make sure you check the following:

- What is it measuring? Is it relevant to the requirements of the role? Does it enable the measurement of competencies and values specific to the role? Can it be mapped to the CVF?
- How well are the criteria for the role being measured? Is it an accurate measurement (reliable)?
- How well does it predict job performance (validity)?
- How well does the solution perform in relation to adverse impact (including if different cut-scores are applied)?
- How cost effective is it (cost per candidate)?

Where there are multiple stages in a selection process, the order that tools are administered in the process can contribute to whether someone progresses through to the later stages or not. Before concluding that a tool does not work, consider whether or not it sits in the right order in the process and seek the rationale for its position. The ordering of tools in the process can also have implications for adverse impact and is explored in more detail in **section 6.3**.

Always seek specialist advice if you are not sure about the application of a particular selection solution.



6. Diversity, fairness and adverse impact

Securing the very best talent for the police service involves maximising diversity, equality and inclusion. Diverse and inclusive workforces are better able to deliver public service. Getting recruitment right is key to enabling diversity and ensuring your practices help secure equality of access for all. The **2018-2025 NPCC Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Strategy** provides clarity around action that is required by the police service to embed diversity, equality and inclusion into the workforce and the service provided to communities.

The College of Policing **Positive Action – A guide for police recruitment** seeks to support work in this area.

6.1 Positive action

The aim of positive action is to create equality of opportunity and address barriers that prevent people from achieving their potential. It is about levelling the playing field, providing mitigations for any disadvantage, difference in need or underrepresentation that are connected to a protected characteristic.

Some key features of the Positive Action Guidance include:

- The public sector equality duty to promote equality of opportunity and the lawful use of positive action (and its distinction from positive discrimination).
- Proportionate actions to address disadvantage, need or underrepresentation.
- The point at which positive action can be implemented in a recruitment process.
- Inclusion for all.
- Attraction and retention.
- Strategies to secure a fair and inclusive recruitment process.
- The appropriate application of section 159 of the Equality Act or the 'equal merit' provision (allowing an employer to favour someone who shares a protected characteristic over someone who does not, providing both people are as qualified as one another).
- Monitoring practices to support positive action.

Positive action in practice

As well as having dedicated positive action teams, forces have reported the following as some examples of increasing the number of initial applications/registrations and decreasing attrition rates for underrepresented groups⁵:

- Ensuring that officers and staff from underrepresented groups are involved in the attraction campaign and in helping to increase the understanding about the nature of the role and the variety of roles available to applicants in their policing career.
- Targeting awareness events in harder-to-reach communities and highly diverse communities.
- Targeting underrepresented groups prior to opening applications, with support on how to complete applications and advice on how to best prepare for the process.

⁵ Forces are advised to refer to the College of Policing's Positive Action guide for the lawful use of positive action. Forces are encouraged to also seek legal advice for any positive action activity as part of their recruitment process.

6.2 Candidate support

Support materials are a way of helping every applicant do their best and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity. Information and support reduces applicant questions and anxieties about the process.

Typically supporting materials provide:

- information about the application and assessment process
- hints and tips for preparing for each stage
- effective examples/descriptions of what successful applicants have done
- practice versions of assessments/tests
- timescales and how notifications about decisions are communicated
- using applicant/recruitment portals
- contact details for extra support

Further to the public sector equality duty, any assessment solution must be created and implemented with accessibility and equality of opportunity in mind. Reasonable adjustments for people with a disability must be made as per the Equality Act 2010.

Some evidence shows that asking candidates to consider their motivation for applying and what they bring to policing and their community can have a positive impact on the performance of underrepresented groups. Being asked to think about their values can also improve candidate performance by 'positive priming'. For more information on these interventions and other ways to maximise candidate performance and reduce adverse impact on underrepresented groups, see the Behavioural Insights Team Update Report 2013 to 2015⁶, the CIPD report, A Head for Hiring⁷, and the Behavioural Insights Team and the College's rapid evidence assessment on tackling unconscious bias in recruitment, selection and promotion processes⁸.

6 <https://www.bi.team/publications/the-behavioural-insights-team-update-report-2013-2015/>

7 https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/a-head-for-hiring_2015-behavioural-science-of-recruitment-and-selection_tcm18-9557.pdf

8 https://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Unconscious_bias_REA_exec_sum.pdf

6.3 Adverse impact

Adverse impact is considered to have occurred when the success rate of the minority group is less than 80% (or four-fifths) of the majority group (Adverse Impact Ratio ≤ 0.8). This may suggest the process is unfairly discriminating against a protected group if there is no reason to suspect that there are genuine ability or performance differences between the groups.

Earlier in this guidance, adverse impact is discussed in the context of individual tools because they are researched in isolation, not as part of an end-to-end selection process. It is important to note that adverse impact should be considered over the whole selection process, and not to become overly focused on an individual element (unless the selection process only consists of that one element). Any adverse impact found with a particular element of the process will impact on the adverse impact of the overall process. This overall outcome will only be known once the process is complete and is where monitoring plays such a crucial role (see [section 7](#)).

Unless there is a clear understanding of why the adverse impact is occurring in a process, making changes to one element of it risks replacing one problematic tool with another. There could be a number of reasons why the adverse impact ratio is affected:

- the effectiveness of the attraction strategy, including the approach to positive action
- the support provided for minority and majority groups
- the ordering of tools can lead to adverse impact in a particular tool, as well as affect the adverse impact of the process overall

It is important to remember that while the aim is to minimise, and ideally eliminate, adverse impact from a selection process, the relevance that a particular measure/tool has to the role is just as critical in being able to legally defend the process as being an accurate and valid measure of the requirements of the role.

The College of Policing have developed a tool to help forces calculate adverse impact. The link to the tool, including guidance on how to use it can be found [here](#).

6.4 The dilemma

The goal when designing a selection process includes maximising predictive job performance, minimising costs and reducing adverse impact, while ensuring candidates receive a positive experience of the process.

The dilemma arises when we must choose between measures that have the highest validity and those that result in the least amount of adverse impact. Ignoring adverse impact opens up the potential of creating disproportionality, breaching the public sector equality duty and ultimately risking legal challenge. However, ignoring validity also creates a risk of potentially employing people who will be unable to perform effectively and the organisation being unable to legally defend the process.

The perfect solution would be to use a single measure that is both highly predictive and

results in low adverse impact. However, most measures that are highly predictive also have high adverse impact. Rather than individually selecting measures with the highest validity, it would be most efficient to pick those with the greatest combined validity. Assessment Centres are good examples of such a selection method, with high validity and less adverse impact. However, they tend to be where the cost is highest and the aim of the guidance is to consider the selection methods prior to the National Assessment Process, to get best value from the the assessment process places.

It is important to remember that the presence or absence of adverse impact is not a legal requirement as it does not demonstrate legal compliance on its own. Monitoring adverse impact is necessary to fulfil the legal duties. If you cannot state whether there is disproportionality, you are unable to eliminate potential inequality (for more information on monitoring, see [section 7](#)).

6.5 Use of cut-scores

The key aim for sifting is to ‘select out’ people who have little chance of success in the role. Cut-scores are required to differentiate between candidates and determine who will proceed to the later stages of the selection process.

Two options are available to manage candidate numbers: selecting a fixed number of candidates for the next stage of the process or selecting those who meet a pre-defined cut-score.

Setting of the cut-score is fundamental in ensuring you reduce the chances of the sift rejecting people who would be suitable for the job and increasing the chances of the sift rejecting people who would not be suitable.

High cut-scores and the use of a single test in shortlisting candidates should be avoided unless there is very strong evidence to support them. Using a lower cut-score may result in less disproportionality between candidates from different backgrounds (adverse impact). However, with a lower standard comes a greater number of successful candidates from all backgrounds and a less effective sift, potentially resulting

in lower pass rates at the National Assessment Process. General guidance suggests sifting out up to 30% of candidates using a sift tool with good validity. Higher cut-scores increase the risks of rejecting large numbers of potentially good applicants and also increase risks of adverse impact arising.

Assessing more than one aspect of performance potential, using different measures is key when a larger number of candidates need to be selected out. Different tools combined with eligibility criteria (ie, required qualifications) broaden the sifting criteria (see **Figure 1**). Taking all the measures together, a larger proportion of candidates can be selected out as being unsuitable without using high cut-offs on any one tool. This approach can also increase the validity of a selection procedure by assessing more aspects of performance potential.

To set the cut-score for a recruitment campaign, it is advisable to ‘model’ what the outcome would be using real candidate data (either current, live data or data from a previous process). In determining where to set the cut-score, ensure you consider:

- Applying a cut-score that removes more than 30% of candidates requires the results to be carefully checked for adverse impact as well as the impact on pass rates.
- Monitor pass rates for each protected group for every round of recruitment – this will not always show the same results each time.
- Sample size – too small a sample size will result in an unreliable measure of adverse impact.
- If a tool has been procured from an external company, they should provide guidance and advice on cut-scores for the particular tool.

7. Monitoring



The NPCC Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy recognises the value of monitoring practices:

‘We will better understand the composition of our workforce by ensuring we put in place systems that enable the collection, collation and analysis of workforce data across the nine strands of diversity. We will put in place effective strategies that enable formal and informal engagement with our staff and support networks to ensure we better understand how we can continue to develop an inclusive organisational culture that promotes and embeds diversity and equality.’

Monitoring and evaluating your process is an essential part of running a successful recruitment approach and should be considered from the outset when outlining your recruitment strategy. It will help to:

- identify the impact of each stage/practice within the selection process
- enable continuous improvement and informed decisions about what works, including with different applicant populations
- enable timely changes to the selection process prior to the next round of selection
- create a case for further positive action to remove disadvantage, address particular needs and/or lack of participation
- enable meaningful reporting to the appropriate governance board responsible for decisions on recruiting

It is good practice to monitor the following for each of your selection processes, as there is no guarantee that the same results will be found each time despite using the same process. All data should be stored and processed in line with the general data protection regulation:

Success	Attrition	Time	Diversity	Candidate experience
At each individual selection stage as well as overall.	Monitoring drop-out rates (and the reasons for any withdrawals/deselection) at each stage of the process can help to make informed decisions about improving strategy and practice.	Monitoring the time taken from application to appointment, as well as for each individual stage of the process is important in providing your force with a realistic picture of the cost per candidate. It also helps to identify if any stage of the process is adding unnecessary time to the process which could contribute towards an increased drop-out rate.	Monitoring protected group progression throughout the process is essential in monitoring any adverse impact (of the whole process and at each stage) and identifying any elements of the assessment which act as an obstacle to a protected group due to disproportionate drop-out at a particular stage. This form of monitoring is helpful in informing decisions to review and consider whether the approach is effective.	How candidates view the relevance, fairness, timescales and other factors should be collated. High-quality candidate experience is a key success factor in securing engagement from those who are ultimately successful, and helps manage the reputation of your force/organisation with both successful and unsuccessful applicants. Candidate reaction to an assessment situation has been shown to influence performance.

Most of the data and intelligence you will need to build up a solid end-to-end picture can be found through your recruitment website (to better understand attraction traffic) and then from your ATS. It is worth considering what kind of data you will need and whether your current systems capture that for you, when you develop your recruitment strategy.

Any changes that result from monitoring and evaluating should be continually monitored to ensure they add value and improve the process. There should be a clearly identified benefit of any changes, which might mean conducting comparisons before and after changes have been made. Monitoring has an important role to play in ‘closing the loop’ and assessing the success against the recruitment strategy.

There are currently no centrally defined key performance indicators or targets for police recruitment, eg, with respect to time to hire, cost per hire etc. End-to-end recruitment data is not consistently collected across forces, specifically the time a candidate spends on each stage of the process. Not only is it an important factor in calculating the time to hire/cost per hire but it is likely to be a key aspect of applicant reaction/satisfaction and may be related to drop-out rates.

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Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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