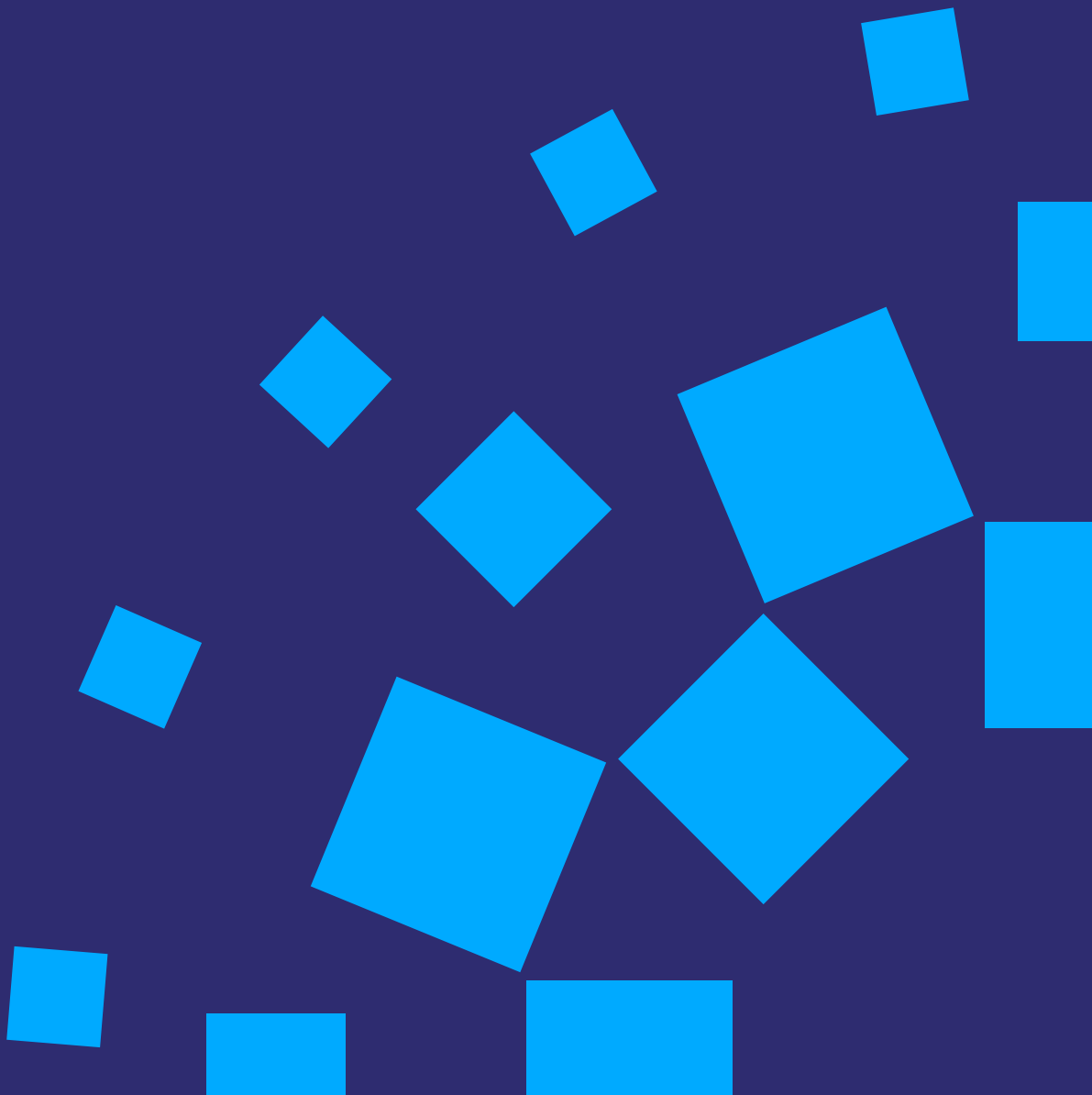


# National Police Promotion Framework

## Operating manual

June 2023



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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This operating manual outlines the procedures for force implementing the National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) for promotion of officers to the rank of sergeant and inspector. This version supersedes the guidance dated April 2019.
- 1.2 Forces are mandated under Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 with the requirements of the NPPF. In addition, forces implementing the framework should meet the requirements of the NPPF quality assurance system.
- 1.3 This operating manual details both the mandatory steps of the NPPF and guidance for forces in the implementation of NPPF. In particular, the operating manual:
  - describes the operating procedures for the four steps of the promotion process
  - describes the process of applying the four steps to all candidates for sergeant and inspector promotions
  - outlines arrangements for further monitoring of the framework
- 1.4 Compliance with both the mandatory steps and guidance outlined within this operating manual and those outlined above, will satisfy the College of Policing that the NPPF is being applied rigorously, fairly and consistently by all participating forces.
- 1.5 The NPPF quality assurance process supports consistent implementation of the promotion system for sergeants and inspectors. It seeks to do this by striking an appropriate balance between a force's local accountability for a fair process of promotion to the ranks of sergeant and inspector and the need to ensure standardisation at the local and national level, and fairness and equality across the service.

- 1.6 Forces operating the NPPF must know and understand their statutory duties in respect of the Equality Act 2010, and in particular the general duty on public authorities to have due regard to:
- eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - advancing equality of opportunity with due regard to the protected characteristics
  - fostering good relations between people, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding
  - being able to demonstrate how they have shown due regard to the public sector equality duty

While the College of Policing has published its own equality impact assessment, forces must also give due regard to the equality impact when introducing and implementing NPPF in their own force area.

- 1.7 Female officers, officers from minority ethnic backgrounds and officers with other protected characteristics are underrepresented in supervisory ranks. These officers should be specifically encouraged to apply through positive action initiatives. However, promotion is a competitive process and final selection and promotion will be based on merit, with the best officers promoted to the rank of sergeant or inspector in each force. Forces may wish to use further positive action provisions, however, following the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.8 To adopt the NPPF, forces must complete the registration documentation and engage in the quality assurance system. The quality assurance system is based on the software application, Police Service Quality Management System. Access can be obtained via [psqms.enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:psqms.enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk)
- 1.9 This document also provides guidance for delivering leadership learning and development alongside the NPPF to support candidates in evidencing competency. See [section 8](#) for further explanation.
- 1.10 Contact details for the College of Policing project team are provided in [section 16](#).

## 2 NPPF data capture and quality assurance

- 2.1 The College is working with forces to collate and forward to [psqms.enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:psqms.enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk), on an annual basis, biographical data of candidates as they progress through the NPPF. In addition, a new data set of candidates who have completed NPPF Step Four will be required. This data set will include candidates who have been successful and made substantive in the rank and those who have been assessed as not meeting the required standard. It will not include those who voluntarily leave the NPPF.

### NPPF quality assurance system

- 2.2 An overview of the quality assurance system is set out below. Full details can be found in the [\*\*National Police Promotion Framework Quality Assurance System Version 2.1 September 2017\*\*](#). A copy can be obtained on the College of Policing website.
- 2.3 The NPPF quality assurance system applies to both the promotion of sergeants and inspectors. However, it is acknowledged that forces may not run promotion activity for both ranks at the same time. For the purposes of validation, forces can therefore use material from current promotion processes, whether it is sergeants or inspectors. However, forces will also be expected to explain how they will apply the NPPF to the other rank. For example, they may indicate that exactly the same approach will apply or they may describe any differences. The following is a high level overview of the NPPF quality assurance system; with the following sections explaining each stage in more detail.

Registration	<p>Force registers on the police service quality management system that it is now promoting officers under the National Police Promotion Framework.</p> <p>Registration details must be kept up to date.</p>
Validation of implementation	<p>At the same time as a force promotes officers via the NPPF, it addresses the requirements of the NPPF quality assurance system. Approval by the College of Policing must be achieved within the first 12 months of an individual force operating the NPPF.</p> <p>Validation in most cases will be by remote desktop analysis.*</p> <p>12 months is indicative – actual timing will depend on when a force plans to implement Step Three activity for both sergeants and inspectors.</p> <p>*Validation visits will only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances, for example if one or more major issues have been identified during the desktop analysis.</p> <p>Quality assurance will cover all four steps up to the point when forces register candidates with an awarding body.</p>
Interim reporting	<p>After two years, forces will be sent a request to review and, where appropriate, update their self-assessments. Examples added as evidence should be current, for example: professional development review, data capture, and registration with awarding bodies.</p> <p>Updated self-assessments will be reviewed remotely.</p>
Renewal	<p>After four years, forces will be subject to renewal under the NPPF quality assurance system. This will require the submission of a fully revised self-assessment.</p>



All forces are required to use the NPPF to promote candidates to the ranks of sergeant and inspector. The NPPF quality assurance system will only become relevant, however, when a force actively promotes using the NPPF.

## Structure of the National Police Promotion Framework

- 2.4 The NPPF consists of four steps, ending in an assessed temporary period of promotion in the rank to which the candidate aspires. At each step it is possible for a candidate to attain, exceed or fall short of the standards required. The four steps of the process for new entrants into the NPPF are:
- **Step One:** Competence in current rank.
  - **Step Two:** Legal knowledge examination.
  - **Step Three:** Assessment against rank-specific competencies and matching to vacancies.
  - **Step Four:** Temporary promotion and work-based assessment.
- 2.5 It is important that forces present the NPPF as a national continuous process and that officers are expected to progress within the defined timescales. The national aspects of the framework allow for greater interoperability between forces.
- 2.6 As per the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996, having secured a pass at NPPF Step Two, candidates remain eligible for promotion for as long as they have time left in their NPPF Step Two validity period. The validity period is five years (less one day) commencing the date they took the legal knowledge exam at NPPF Step Two. During this period, candidates must be selected at Step Three as being suitable for temporary promotion within the next 12 months. If the candidate has not been successfully selected at Step Three before the end of the validity period, they must retake the legal examination at Step Two or reapply at NPPF Step One.

- 2.7 The four steps are continuous within the promotion process and candidates must undertake each step with the intention of completing the whole process as soon as possible. This is to allow candidates to make best use of the skills they develop as they progress through the four steps, allow forces to control the promotion process and to promote the right number of officers to meet the needs of the force. Provision will be made, however, for circumstances such as where an officer takes maternity or paternity support leave, adoption or adoption support leave, disability-related leave, a career break for the purposes of care, workforce planning requirements, availability of vacancies and reasonable adjustments for disabled officers. This list is not exhaustive and each case must be considered by the forces on its merits.
- 2.8 Where an officer takes maternity leave, paternity leave, maternity-related sickness leave, adoption leave, or a career break for the purposes of care, the time taken shall not count towards a reduction of the relevant NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) validity period. For example, where an officer has three years remaining in the NPPF Step Two validity period and takes maternity leave for one year, the remaining validity period upon return to work will be three years. Further information on the NPPF Step Two validity period can be found on the College of Policing website [\*\*NPPF Step Two Candidate Handbook page\*\*](#).

## 3 Step One: Competence in current rank

### Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this step is to ensure that candidates are suitable to enter the promotion process. This means establishing that the candidate is competent in their current rank, rather than assessing potential for temporary promotion to another rank.

### Procedure

- 3.2 It should be made clear to all prospective candidates at the very start of the promotion process that promotion opportunities are very likely to be limited and that promotion can be a highly competitive process. Not all candidates will ultimately succeed in gaining a promotion to the rank to which they aspire. Forces should ensure that all candidates have a realistic understanding of what is required of them, and of the opportunity for promotion, throughout the four steps of the process.
- 3.2.1 While not part of the eligibility criteria or assessment of competence in the current rank (NPPF Step One), there is evidence that force-level briefings to potential candidates are of value in allowing officers to properly reflect on the timing of their application and likely prospects of success. Briefings aimed at officers who have made repeated unsuccessful attempts for promotion are of equal value. Such briefings have been shown to manage expectations of officers and reduce the number of applicants, which then minimises abstraction and force costs. The primary aim of such briefings is to provide officers with information. They must not be used to dissuade officers from applying.
- 3.3 Candidates should register for the examination using AIMS, our online assessment registration system. Candidates will be provided with a link and details on how to register from their force examinations officer (FEO). Once a candidate has

registered for the examination, the FEO will be required to verify that they are eligible to take the exam within the online registration system. Candidates must complete the Step One confirmation of eligibility form, including line manager confirmation, and return to their FEO by the force deadline given. Forces may choose to have their own internal processes for candidates to follow to ensure that this information is provided fully and timely to them. The national form can be obtained from the [College's NPPF webpage](#).

- 3.4 The line manager and basic command unit/operational command unit (BCU/OCU) commander/head of department (or nominee) will complete the Step One confirmation of eligibility form, verifying that a candidate has satisfied the eligibility criteria as set out in [3.7](#). All candidates who meet the eligibility criteria should progress to NPPF Step Two. If a candidate's eligibility has not been confirmed, the line manager should meet with the candidate to discuss which of the criteria in [3.7](#) has not been met and to identify an appropriate course of action.
- 3.5 All candidate confirmation of eligibility forms must be signed by the candidate and verified for factual accuracy by their line manager and second line manager. Completed forms must be sent to the FEO, who will then register candidates in the College of Policing's AIMS system to ensure they are enrolled to sit the legal knowledge examination. Confirmation of eligibility forms are retained in force and do not need to be sent to the College of Policing.
- 3.5.1 Candidates on the Fast Track constable to inspector process are, by virtue of being accepted onto that programme, deemed to meet the eligibility criteria. They must, however, still register for the examination in the required timeframe using AIMS, the online registration system. The FEO will still be required to validate their registration and allocate them to an exam in the same way as all other candidates. See [section 11](#). National Police Promotion Framework Operating manual 2021 for more information regarding Fast Track officers.

- 3.6 Candidates who are successful at Step One will be validated and allocated to the Step Two (NPPF Step Two: Legal knowledge examination) in AIMS by their FEO.

## **Eligibility criteria**

- 3.7 NPPF Step One confirms that candidates have:
- completed their probationary period and, for progression to sergeant only, have completed two years' service (or three years' service in the case of the police constable degree apprenticeship (PCDA) programme)
  - for sergeant to inspector progression, completed NPPF Step Four work-based assessment (NPPF sergeants only). A candidate seeking to apply for the inspectors' legal knowledge examination needs to be substantive in rank as a sergeant on or before the day of the inspectors' examination and have completed a mandatory 12-month work-based assessment (if NPPF qualified). A candidate cannot be made substantive before this has been completed.
  - demonstrated competence in that rank through their performance and development review (PDR), or Student Officer Learning and Assessment Portfolio (SOLAP)/ acceptable equivalent
  - no live written improvement notices issued under the Police (Performance) Regulations 2020 or reduction in rank under those procedures in the previous 12 months, beginning with the date of the notice
  - no live written warning, final written warning or extended final written warning issued under the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020
  - adhered to the attendance management policy, taking full account of the Police Advisory Board guidance on attendance management

The above eligibility criteria should remain throughout all steps of the NPPF process.

## **Officers who have previously been reduced in rank**

3.8 Where under current or former regulations a substantive sergeant or inspector was reduced in rank, they may, after any period of disqualification, reapply for promotion. In such cases, officers will commence the process at NPPF Step One but will not be required to undertake Step Two if they are still within their five-year validity period. If selected at Step Three, they will follow the promotion process under which they were originally successful.

- Officers who were originally substantively promoted under the OSPRE process will again be substantively promoted and be subject to a 12-month probationary period (sergeants only). A chief officer may determine that, to refresh their knowledge and skills, officers should undertake the work-based assessment as part of a development programme.
- As the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) units are constantly reviewed, it is strongly advised that officers engage with the process to ensure their skills and knowledge equip them for the role.
- Officers who were originally promoted through NPPF will again be temporarily promoted and retake any new or revised units within the work-based assessment. This is to allow for knowledge and skills to be assessed against any changes in the underpinning National Occupational Standards. Candidates will also be assessed on performance over the mandatory 12-month period.
- Where no significant changes to the RQF units have been recorded, the chief officer may make a determination to substantively promote an officer based only on performance evidence over the mandatory 12-month period.

## **Officers subject to criminal or misconduct investigations**

- 3.8.1 Officers may become the subject of criminal or misconduct investigations as they progress through the promotion process. In such cases, forces must examine the particular circumstances of the investigation and decide whether the officer should be removed from the promotion process or whether it is possible for them to proceed.
- 3.8.2 Where an officer is removed from the promotion process, the officer may appeal this decision (but not the issues relevant to the investigation). The appeal must be heard by an independent party to the investigation and be limited to the issues relevant to continuance in the promotion process. Where the decision is not appealed or the appeal is refused, the officer will be withdrawn from the NPPF. The FEO must inform the College of Policing Selection and Assessment department that the officer has been removed from the promotion process, but the surrounding circumstances are confidential and must not be disclosed.
- 3.8.3 Where an officer remains in the promotion process, they must also be informed whether or not they will be allowed to proceed to the next step while the investigation is live. Such decisions are also subject to an appeal. The various validity periods or time limits built into the NPPF process will continue to run down, irrespective of whether an officer is permitted to proceed to the next step or not.
- 3.8.4 Forces and professional standards units must consider the impact on an officer's promotion status before an officer is moved to a non-public-facing or non-operational role. Allowing an officer to remain in the promotion process but in a role where they are unable to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the current or next step of the promotion process would be unfair and should be avoided.
- 3.8.5 Where an officer is allowed to proceed to or remain in Step Four, a decision to substantively promote an officer at the end of the

12 months may be deferred if, at that time, the misconduct or investigation is not yet complete. In some cases, officers may be proven to be in misconduct or found guilty of an offence but will have successfully completed the work-based assessment. Such officers would not be substantively promoted as they are unlikely to meet the satisfactory performance criteria as discussed in [section 6.8](#) below. Where the officer has successfully attained the assessment units, however, the external qualification may still be awarded.

- 3.8.6 Where, following an investigation or misconduct hearing, an officer is completely exonerated, an application can be made to the College of Policing to extend the validity period at Step Two so that the officer is not disadvantaged. In general terms, where the candidate is supported by their force, the College will look to add to the validity period any time (in calendar days) where the officer was suspended from duty or placed in a role where they were unable to access the next part of the promotion process.
- 3.8.7 Where a finding is imposed such as a written warning (which carries a 12-month prohibition at Step One), the officer may, subject to the agreement of the chief officer, be retained in the promotion process, providing they also have a sufficient validity period remaining to allow them to undertake the next step. The validity period would not generally be extended in such cases unless there were additional factors, such as serious illness, to be considered. In such cases, application to extend the relevant time period may, subject to the support of the chief officer, be made to the College of Policing.

## **Assessment in the PDR**

- 3.9 Competence in the current rank should be demonstrated through a satisfactory rating (or equivalent grade) in the applicant's current PDR or force appraisal process. The PDR process in each force should be in line with the College of Policing PDR guidance. Competence in the current rank should be assessed using the national standards for assessment in policing against the relevant



professional profile for constables or sergeants. For more information, see [\*\*College of Policing Professional Development Platform\*\*](#) and [\*\*College of Policing Career Development\*\*](#).

See [\*\*profdev.college.police.uk\*\*](https://profdev.college.police.uk)

- 3.9.1 If a candidate does not have a current PDR, the line manager may refer back to the last PDR. Where evidence is dated, the line manager should conduct an interim assessment and record this in the candidate's PDR. The onus is on the force to ensure that PDRs, or their equivalent, are completed.
- 3.10 The professional profiles provide minimum national criteria to assess competence, but chief officers have the discretion to set additional local criteria they consider relevant to local policing needs. The professional profiles are not mandatory, but where a force uses an alternative framework, that model will be mapped across to the professional profile.
- 3.11 Candidates deemed to lack competence against the criteria at 3.1 above may make a fresh application if they can provide further evidence of competence. If there is no immediate new evidence, the candidate should create a development plan in conjunction with their manager and then reapply in line with that plan. This development plan should be part of the candidate's PDR or equivalent. If an applicant is unsuccessful at Step One, the reasons should be recorded and detailed in the candidate's PDR.
- 3.12 Admission to Step Two (legal knowledge examination) for promotion to the rank of sergeant is restricted to constables who, by the date of the legal examination, have:
- completed two years' service and their probationary period
  - been confirmed in their appointment
  - not previously obtained a pass to the rank of sergeant in a recognised police promotion examination (ie, are not already an OSPRE Parts I and II qualified sergeant).
- 3.13 A pass mark refers to completing the full promotion process, for example OSPRE I and II or Steps One to Four of NPPF. It does

not refer to candidates who have previously taken the legal knowledge exam but whose validity period has expired.

- 3.14 Candidates nearing completion of their probationary period may apply for promotion at Step One if they are supported by their force and expect to achieve the substantive rank by the date of Step Two (legal knowledge examination).
- 3.15 The exception is constables participating in the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS), who may take Step Two (legal knowledge examination) the next time it is delivered but must still register at Step One within the specified time frames. HPDS officers are subject to specific provisions made by the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996. Officers and forces should refer to the regulations and HPDS policy for further information.
- 3.16 The same provisions apply to officers who are accepted onto the constable to inspector Fast Track process. The only variation is that constables will apply for the next Step Two (legal knowledge examination) process for inspector, not the sergeant's exam. Fast Track officers are subject to the provisions made by the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996. Officers should refer to the regulations and Fast Track policy for further information. See [section 11](#).
- 3.17 Admission to Step Two (legal knowledge examination) for promotion to the rank of inspector is currently restricted to sergeants who, by the date of the Step Two legal knowledge examination, have:
- attained the rank of sergeant, otherwise than on temporary promotion
  - not previously obtained a pass to the rank of inspector in a recognised police promotion examination (ie, are not already an OSPRE Parts I and II qualified inspector).
- 3.18 Sergeants must be of substantive rank before undertaking Step Two (legal knowledge examination) for the rank of inspector. In this context, substantive refers to:

- OSPRE Parts I and II qualified sergeant – are substantive from day one of being promoted to sergeant
- NPPF Steps One to Four qualified sergeant – successfully completed the work-based assessment and been assessed as satisfactory (or equivalent)

- 3.18.1 Providing officers are supported by their force, applications to take the inspectors promotion process (Step One of the NPPF) may be submitted during a sergeant's period of temporary promotion at NPPF Step Four. Forces and candidates must have a reasonable expectation that the officer will be made substantive in the rank of sergeant (NPPF candidates) by the date of the inspectors' Step Two legal knowledge examination. Officers who have applied early but who have not been confirmed or made substantive will not, even if initially supported at Step One, be permitted to take the legal knowledge exam.
- 3.18.2 For officers on the standard NPPF route, in a minority of cases, some sergeants could complete the inspector promotion process but not yet have attained the two years' service in the rank of sergeant as required under regulation 3 of the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996. In such cases, officers cannot be promoted until such time as they do meet service length criteria.
- 3.19 While HPDS and Fast Track officers are subject to specific provisions made by the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 as amended, they must be confirmed (OSPRE candidates) or have been made substantive (NPPF) in the rank of sergeant before they can be made temporary inspector. Officers and forces should refer to the regulations and HPDS/Fast Track policy for further information.

## **Monitoring and reporting**

- 3.20 The College of Policing's quality assurance system requires that forces tick the box in AIMS to confirm that a candidate's confirmation of eligibility form has been reviewed and that the candidate is eligible to progress to Step Two.

## 4 Step Two: Legal knowledge examination

### Purpose

- 4.1 The purpose of this step is to ensure candidates have the appropriate legal knowledge relevant to the rank of sergeant or inspector.

### Procedure

- 4.2 Step Two is the legal knowledge examination. It is a national paper-based multiple-choice question examination. The syllabus is the same for all candidates.
- 4.3 The NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) pass is valid for five years commencing on the date of taking the examination. A candidate must be within this validity period to be selected for promotion at the NPPF Step Three (local selection process).
- 4.4 Candidates can register for the NPPF Step Two Legal knowledge examination if their validity period is near the end without having to forfeit their remaining validity time should a Step Three process be announced by the force in the months between the registration date and the examination date. If the candidate is successful at the Step Three process, they must withdraw from the examination at the earliest opportunity and ensure Selection and Assessment are aware that they will not be attending the examination. Candidates who choose not to enter the examination before the registration date and are subsequently unsuccessful at a Step Three process will not be allowed to register late for the examination. They will have to wait until the following year to register for the examination.

Any candidate choosing to retake the NPPF Step Two legal knowledge examination a year or more before their validity period expires will forfeit any remaining time left on their original validity period once they have taken the examination, regardless

of the result (ie, if the candidate fails, their remaining validity of one (or more) year(s) would not still remain).

- 4.5 Candidates may also choose to retain the remainder of their NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) pass in anticipation of a NPPF Step Three process being announced and held between the closing date for entries to NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) and the next examination date. These candidates, if not successful at Step Three or if a Step Three process is not held, may not re-enter the NPPF Step Two until the following year.

## **Criteria**

- 4.6 The pass requirement in the sergeants' and inspectors' NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) is an absolute standard (set pass mark). Those candidates who achieve a score equal to or above the set pass mark will be awarded a pass. Further details in relation to the pass mark will be communicated in the instructions to candidates document, which all candidates receive prior to the examination.
- 4.7 Candidates who are unsuccessful in the NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) will return to NPPF Step One. Unsuccessful candidates must be supported with a development plan after discussion with their line manager.
- 4.8 Chief officers of candidates attaining the exceptional scores will be notified via the FEO.
- 4.9 In exceptional circumstances where a significant and unscheduled event takes place at a venue where a Step Two exam is being held, the NPPF governance board may vary the cut score by 1%. This will only be awarded following a formal appeal by a force, not individual candidates.

## **Monitoring and reporting**

- 4.10 The examination process at NPPF Step Two is designed, delivered, administered and quality assured by the College of Policing. The College's Selection and Assessment department monitors Step Two and provides forces with the results. This includes performance analysis of successful and unsuccessful candidates.
- 4.11 The candidate registration form required at Step One must be received by the College of Policing by the Step Two closing dates published in the annual NPPF Step Two Candidate Handbook document.

## 5 Step Three: Assessment against rank- specific competencies and matching to vacancies

### Purpose

- 5.1 The purpose of this step is to:
- assess candidates' potential to perform at the next rank against the relevant behavioural competencies
  - provide a robust and fair mechanism to broadly match the number of successful candidates to the number of expected vacancies – forces must take account of the NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) five-year expiry period when considering their succession planning needs

### Procedure

- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the force's senior management, in conjunction with human resources specialists, to decide on the structure and techniques used in Step Three to select the appropriate candidates to the rank aspired to. It is also the responsibility of the force to ensure they can demonstrate how they have shown due regard to the public sector equality duty in deciding which procedures to use. Forces are encouraged to use positive action to encourage applications from officers with protected characteristics who are underrepresented in supervisory ranks.
- 5.3 The NPPF Equality Impact Assessment is published on the College of Policing website and will assist forces in identifying the most relevant issues.

- 5.4 It is important to note that the date of the candidate's NPPF Step Three assessment (for example, the date of their Step Three interview) must fall within the five-year validity period. If a candidate has not been selected at NPPF Step Three within five years from the date of taking the NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination), they must return to NPPF Step One.
- 5.5 In planning the date of a NPPF Step Three local selection process, forces **must** take into consideration the five-year validity anniversary date. A Step Three process held just after this anniversary date may unnecessarily exclude candidates in the final year of their validity period. To remain eligible, an officer **must** be within the Step Two validity period on the date they physically participate in the final part of the Step Three process. The result may be known or published at a later date but this will no longer affect a candidate's progression to Step Three and Four. However, where a candidate is selected at Step Three but the actual participation date falls outside of the validity period, the officer will not be allowed to proceed to NPPF Step Four (work-based assessment). See [section 9](#) on re-appeals.
- 5.6 Forces must advertise at an early stage the method chosen to test candidates at Step Three and the RQF units used at Step Four. This is to give candidates the opportunity to prepare for the process. Forces must set out the competencies they are testing and any other requirements expected of candidates. Candidates **must** be told about any changes to the advertised process as soon as possible.
- 5.6.1 Where a Step Three date is brought forward, delayed or the content of the process is altered in a material way from that previously published, care must be taken to ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to prepare. This does not mean an equal number of days but rather that officers who will participate first have reasonable time to adjust to the new requirements expected of them. It will be for forces to determine what is reasonable adjustment time.



- 5.6.2 Advising candidates of the projected number of vacancies at a rank, and the potential number of candidates seeking promotion, should be seen as good practice prior to the start of a Step Three process.

### **Unsuitable for promotion at this stage**

- 5.7 A candidate who is unsuccessful at Step Three can remain within the NPPF and participate in the next Step Three as long as their Step Two pass remains valid.
- 5.7.1 In all cases, candidates must be given the opportunity to develop through an action plan agreed with their line manager and then to retake Step Three, as long as their Step Two pass remains valid. This development plan forms part of the candidate's PDR and must set out milestones so that the candidate knows when they have reached the appropriate point to retake Step Three.
- 5.7.2 The NPPF is a process for career progression and it is recognised that there is an inherent degree of learning and skills development for all candidates. If an officer's performance dips at any stage in the NPPF they should be given the opportunity to develop their skills through a development plan linked to their PDR or equivalent. Forces should refer to the Home Office's statutory guidance on Professional Standards, Performance and Integrity in Policing and the associated regulations to effectively implement and manage this process. The development plan should be agreed with the line manager and should be put in place to enable the officer to continue, where possible, participating in the NPPF process. Where a development plan has been implemented but has been unsuccessful in improving performance, the reasons should be recorded and detailed in the officer's PDR. If an officer's performance continues to be below the standard expected, and the force no longer wishes to support them for promotion, reference should be made to the relevant police regulations, for example the Police (Performance) Regulations 2020 or, where appropriate, the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 or Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020.

The College of Policing has no remit to review or overturn a decision under the Performance Regulations and any subsequent removal of an officer at any stage of the NPPF.

## **Suitable for promotion**

- 5.8 As vacancies occur, candidates selected for promotion at Step Three will be posted on a temporary basis for a minimum of 12 months as part of an organisational succession plan. This posting will take into account factors such as specialist skills, need for further skills-based training, recent completion of probation and geographic location. If there are no immediate vacancies, individuals will be placed in a pool of candidates to await placement when a suitable vacancy does arise. Forces should aim not to retain any candidate in such a pool for longer than 12 months.
- 5.8.1 In exceptional cases it may not be possible to place a pooled candidate within the initial 12 months. Forces should make every effort to place the individual within an additional maximum of 24-month period. If no suitable vacancy is found within this extended period (36 months in total), the candidate must reapply at Step Three as long as their Step Two legal knowledge examination remains valid. Not many candidates will need to remain in the pool for the maximum period allowed. The onus is on force managers to ensure that measures are built into their posting policy to ensure that individuals are not indirectly discriminated against due to lack of opportunity.
- 5.9 In considering whether or not to extend a candidate's 12-month pool period, forces must distinguish between candidates who have not previously been offered temporary promotion at Step Four and those who have, but declined the posting due to personal preference. Where relevant, forces must consider the reason for that personal choice, taking account of all the circumstances, including any impact or potential impact on equality. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for the candidate to return to Step Three than to

extend their time in the pool so long as their Step Two legal knowledge examination remains valid. Forces must treat each case on its individual merits.

- 5.10 Forces must ensure that the management of candidates in the promotion pool is consistent and fair. The additional 24 months is not a default position, but is available for partial or full use in exceptional circumstances. It is for forces to decide what constitutes an exceptional circumstance. It is not to be used as an alternative to effective workforce planning, which should include matching numbers selected to projected vacancies.

## **Criteria**

- 5.11 Candidates will be assessed against criteria relevant to the rank aspired to and any standards set by the force. The promotion process selected by the force and any local standards must be monitored by the force to ensure fairness and equality of opportunity, and be of a type and standard consistent with the quality assurance process. The criteria chosen must be:
- applied fairly and consistently across all candidates
  - related to the rank aspired to for selection

## **Monitoring and reporting**

- 5.12 Forces must monitor the outcomes of the process at Step Three in compliance with the requirements of the quality assurance system.

## 6 Step Four: Temporary promotion and work-based assessment

- 6.1 The NPPF includes a period of workplace assessment of candidates temporarily promoted to and undertaking the duties of sergeant or inspector.

### **Purpose**

- 6.2 The purpose of this step is to:
- provide candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate competence in the rank to which they aspire
  - assess candidates against the RQF assessment units with a view to their achieving substantive promotion at the end of the 12-month period of temporary promotion
- 6.3 Candidates who are selected at NPPF Step Three must be registered with an external awarding body for the accreditation and certification of the relevant RQF units, before or immediately on being temporarily promoted at NPPF Step Four. The expectation is that candidates will achieve certification by the end of the 12-month period. The standard of assessment for those candidates must comply with that specified in the assessment units. The qualifications will be managed in line with the governance processes for all national policing qualifications set out in The Strategic Governance of National Policing Qualifications in England and Wales 2015.
- 6.3.1 Most roles undertaken by a sergeant or inspector are suitable for assessment against the RQF assessment units. There are some limited exceptions, such as the role of staff officer or undercover officer, which would make attaining the learning units difficult as such officers do not generally manage a team. Additionally, officers in defined specialist roles such as custody officer or intelligence may require additional support by way of short-term placements in other work areas to gain the required skills and experience.

- 6.3.2 The required occupational knowledge of competence of assessors is defined in the programme specification and is aligned to the College of Policing Standards for Police Training Roles. Assessors must be trained to assess against national standards or be working towards completing such training.

## **Procedure**

- 6.4.1 Step Four is a mandatory 12-month period of temporary promotion, during which candidates are assessed in the workplace against selected RQF units for the new rank and the professional profile or equivalent. Candidates need to pass both the academic assessment and evidence satisfactory performance in the rank before they can be substantively promoted. While the assessment units may be undertaken and passed in a shorter period, performance (including attendance) in the temporary rank will be assessed over the full 12-month period. In extenuating circumstances, temporary promotion can be extended for up to a maximum of a further 12 months (see [section 9](#)).
- 6.4.2 Forces should provide officers with opportunities for study/protected learning time when undertaking Step Four, to support the completion of their work-based assessment learning requirements. The availability of protected time will be agreed by the force and reviewed through an individual's personal development plan.
- 6.4.3 The NPPF is a process for career progression and it is recognised that there is an inherent degree of learning and skills development for all candidates. If an officer's performance dips at any stage in the NPPF they should be given the opportunity to develop their skills through a development plan linked to their PDR or equivalent. Forces should refer to the Home Office's statutory guidance on Professional Standards, Performance and Integrity in Policing and the associated regulations to effectively implement and manage this process. The development plan should be agreed with the line manager and should be put in place to enable the officer to continue,

where possible, participating in the NPPF process. Where a development plan has been implemented but has been unsuccessful in improving performance, the reasons should be recorded and detailed in the officer's PDR. If an officer's performance continues to be below the standard expected, and the force no longer wishes to support them for promotion, reference should be made to the relevant police regulations, for example the Police (Performance) Regulations 2020 or, where appropriate, the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 or Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020. The College of Policing has no remit to review or overturn a decision under the Performance Regulations and any subsequent removal of an officer at any stage of the NPPF.

- 6.5 At the end of the Step Four work-based assessment, if a candidate fails to achieve a satisfactory assessment in all the assessment standards and/or satisfactory performance/ attendance criteria at the temporary rank, they must return to NPPF Step Three. Line managers should organise a positive and informal meeting with the officer to discuss and explore the perceived shortcomings in performance, including potential underlying causes such as personal problems or issues that need to be resolved independently. Line managers should use this opportunity to provide constructive feedback and to find ways for the officer to achieve sustainable improvement to meet the expected standards. Development plans can be used to support this discussion. Any units that have been completed while a candidate is active at Step Four should be awarded to the candidate. A note should be made of the meeting to include a summary of the key discussion points, as well as any actions and deadlines. It should be shared with the officer concerned and noted on their Personal Development Record (PDR) or equivalent and kept updated with any improvements to performance or attendance.

## Criteria

- 6.6 Candidates will be assessed against the relevant RQF units. Candidates will be assessed in line with the governance processes for all national policing qualifications set out in The Strategic Governance of National Policing Qualifications in England and Wales 2015. Assessors are responsible for ensuring that candidates understand the methods by which they are being assessed.
- 6.7 Candidates will also be assessed within their current PDR on their performance in the temporary rank over the mandated 12-month period. The assessment must be completed within the structure of national assessment protocol for PDR. The PDR assessment should be conducted by the candidate's line manager or other trained individual appointed by the force.

## Substantive promotion

- 6.8 When a candidate has successfully completed the 12-month period of temporary promotion and work-based assessment, they must be considered for promotion to the substantive rank. At this point, forces must also take into consideration the candidate's:
- length of service in the previous rank that is required by Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 – usually two years' service
  - overall performance (as recorded in the candidate's PDR)
  - attendance management record
  - conduct record (as described at 3.1)
  - recommendation from the candidate's BCU/OCU commander/head of department (or nominated delegate)
- The result of the assessment should be noted on the candidate's PDR.
- 6.9 If a candidate who has successfully completed the period of temporary promotion and the work-based assessment is not

given substantive promotion, the reasons for this decision must be evidence-based, justifiable and documented. The process must be fair, consistent and capable of withstanding third-party scrutiny.

## **Temporary promotion outside of NPPF**

6.10 The NPPF does not prevent a chief officer from temporarily promoting any officer to fill a vacancy within the force. However, with the introduction of the NPPF the following considerations also apply:

- Constables and sergeants who are NPPF Step Two/OSPRES Part I qualified may be given opportunities to act up in the next rank. They cannot, however, be temporarily promoted to that higher rank. The Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 (as amended) limit the temporary promotion of officers to the rank of sergeant or inspector to those officers who are qualified. To be qualified, an officer must either:
  - have successfully completed OSPRES I and II
  - have been selected at NPPF Step Three and have commenced the work-based assessment
- Where a temporary vacancy will last for 12 months or more and the role is suitable for assessment against the RQF units, an officer selected at Step Three (OSPRES I and II or NPPF Step Two qualified) should be considered for the role.
- Officers who have previously passed OSPRES I and II and then been selected for promotion at NPPF Step Three should be substantively promoted at that time. It is a decision for chief officers as to whether these officers undertake the Step Four work-based assessment as part of the probationary period (sergeants) or development period (inspectors).
- Where a temporary vacancy is likely to last for less than 12 months or the role is not suitable for assessment against the RQF units, an officer who is OSPRES I and II qualified should be placed within the role.



- Evidence of performance or skills gained while temporarily promoted can only be transferred to a Step Four process if the evidence is relevant, current and can be verified by the awarding body. It is a decision for the awarding body as to whether such evidence will be accepted.

## **Temporary salary provisions**

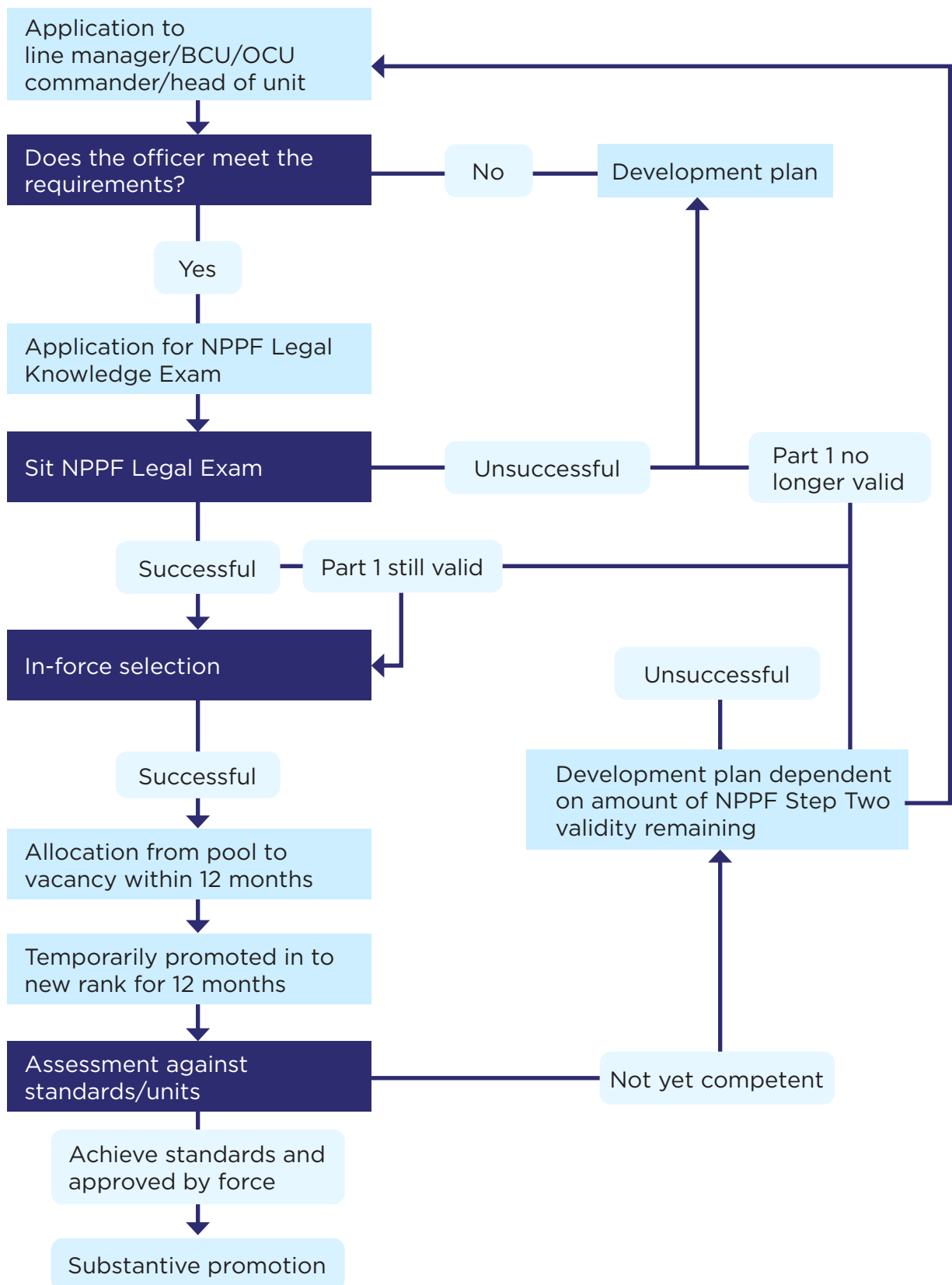
- 6.10.1 Rather than use temporary promotion, forces may wish to consider using the temporary salary provisions to retain constables and sergeants in a higher rank. As per Annex I of Regulation 27, where a member of a police force is entitled to 46 days of acting up (as sergeant, inspector or chief inspector), and that officer has been given an acting up allowance in respect of one continuous period (as per Annex UU of Regulation 34), and at the end of the 46 days they are still required to perform those duties, they will be eligible for pay at a rate equal to the lowest rate of pay to which the member would be entitled to on promotion to the higher rank. Forces should refer to the Police Regulations for details of the legal provisions governing this. Although officers may be eligible to receive a temporary salary, they are not to be seen as temporarily promoted and will be classed as 'acting'. Forces must ensure that the officer understands the difference between temporary promotion and temporary salary. The regulations are clear that no officer shall be eligible to promotion as either sergeant or inspector unless they are qualified for promotion under Regulation 3 of the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996.

## **Use of body-worn video**

- 6.11 The use of technology to capture evidence relevant to the assessment units is strongly encouraged. This also includes the use of body-worn video (BWV), providing its capture, handling and disposal complies with national policy on BWV and the legislative requirements of the prevailing data protection legislation.

- 6.11.1 Data captured by use of BWV is personal data and its processing must be compliant with the principles of the general data protection regulation (GDPR) and associated data protection legislation and be monitored by the data controller. If challenged, forces must be in a position to show that this is being done. Forces must ensure that safeguards are in place to ensure that a recording was in response to a pressing need (eg, obtaining evidence) rather than personal data being processed just to support the promotion process. Where the recording can be used for both, then, provided that it does not breach other data principles (eg, excessive retention, fair processing/transparency), the evidence can be used. For any queries, officers should consult their force data protection officer on their local policies.
- 6.11.2 Policies or force guidance must be in place to ensure that, where footage is used as evidence of performance, only relevant extracts are used. They must also take into account whether audio is required and whether separate storage, access controls or other security measures are required.
- 6.11.3 BWV should not be used where alternative assessment methods would equally be effective or alternative technical options are available. For example, BWV should not be used to record a team briefing where an assessor could attend in person or the candidate openly uses a camera to record the briefing. Officers participating must understand the reason for the recording and cannot be compelled to participate in such recordings.

## 7 NPPF process flowchart



## 8 Leadership learning and development

- 8.1 Forces should consider how best to incorporate leadership learning and development into the NPPF as a way of providing candidates with underpinning knowledge.
- 8.2 While it is open to forces to decide how and when they incorporate leadership programmes into the framework, candidates should start at an early stage so that work-based knowledge can be integrated with later work-based assessment when this is undertaken.
- 8.3 One way of doing this is through the Core Leadership Programme (CLP), which is mapped to relevant RQF learning units. Information on the CLP is accessible via the NCALT-managed learning environment. This is not a mandated requirement for promotion candidates, but is strongly recommended. Incorporating CLP or an equivalent into the National Police Promotion Framework could:
- better equip newly promoted candidates for their role by developing their leadership and management skills
  - develop the careers of candidates through achieving nationally recognised qualifications
- 8.4 In some of the original trial forces, candidates were given acting opportunities and participation in the CLP prior to applying for a promotion place at NPPF Step Three. Candidates who progressed to Step Four found that the CLP gave them the necessary knowledge to undertake the relevant leadership and management units. Those candidates who did not gain a place at Step Four had still significantly developed their professional knowledge and abilities.

## 9 Guidance on extenuating circumstances and appeals procedures

- 9.1 Notes on reasonable adjustments, specifically around NPPF Step Two, are included in the annual NPPF Step Two Candidate Handbook document published by the College. If reasonable adjustments are required during any part of the NPPF, candidates must inform the force (and for NPPF Step Two only, the College of Policing) in good time so that adjustments can be made at each of the four steps.
- 9.2 The College of Policing has an overall responsibility to manage the NPPF and does not, except as at 9.9 below, have a remit to deal with appeals at an individual level. The College will look at any appeal that infers a force has not complied with policy or quality assurance requirements. In such circumstances, the College may advise forces on policy but will not become involved in the appeals process.
- 9.3 Additionally, the College of Policing has no remit to review or overturn a decision of the chief officer in selecting or deselecting an officer at any of the relevant steps in NPPF. Equally it cannot comment on the quality of evidence submitted in support of an officer's application or work-based assessment modules.
- 9.3.1 Where a panel with similar review and appeals functions already exists, providing the decision-making process is transparent, fair and consistent, that panel could be asked to review appeals from the NPPF. There is no requirement for forces to set up an appeals process if a suitable model is already in existence.
- 9.4 Candidates may appeal a decision relevant to Step One, Three or, in part, Step Four of the promotion process. The College of Policing has an extenuating circumstances policy for Step Two, the process for which is set out in the NPPF Step Two Candidate Handbook document. There may also be extenuating circumstances affecting the candidate's ability to successfully

complete certain steps. Extenuating circumstances could be a serious event or series of events, such as death or serious illness of a family member, illness, accident or serious injury to the candidate. Circumstances could be work or home-related and each case should be assessed on its individual merits.

- 9.5 Forces must have an appeals procedure at each step of the NPPF for unsuccessful candidates who wish to appeal against the decision made against them. This is in addition to any in-force fairness at work or grievance procedure. This appeals procedure must be delivered centrally in the force and be independent of the candidate's line management to ensure impartiality and create confidence in the process. Staff associations and diversity staff support associations should be involved in designing, managing and implementing the appeals procedure but should not be asked to adjudicate on an appeal.
- 9.5.1 Each force is responsible for developing and publishing their appeals policy. The College of Policing does not provide an appeal template but has produced 'Guidance for development of appeals policy for use in assessment' ([Appendix 1](#)). This was designed for use with the College's learning products, for work-based assessment, assessment centres and exams. While primarily created for internal College use, it can also be used by forces or other organisations who carry out assessments.
- 9.6 Rather than relying on an appeals process, forces should encourage candidates to highlight any extenuating circumstances as soon as practicable and preferably in advance of an assessment taking place, which may then allow for matters to be rectified or an explanation given to the candidate.

## **Step One: Suitability**

- 9.7 Candidates should be referred to the in-force appeals procedure if they have reason to believe that they met the relevant criteria at Step One but have not been supported in their application.

- 9.7.1 Candidates who have reason to believe that they met the relevant criteria at Step One, but have not been successful due to extenuating circumstances, should also be referred to the in-force appeals procedure. Fairness at work and grievance procedures may also be considered.

## **Step Two: Legal knowledge examination**

- 9.8 Where candidates feel their performance at Step Two has been adversely affected by procedural flaws or extenuating circumstances, they should refer to the NPPF Step Two Candidate Handbook document for guidance on reporting to the College of Policing Reports and Disqualification Panel. A lack of preparation and/or heavy workload before taking Step Two (legal knowledge examination) does not count as extenuating circumstances.
- 9.9 If a candidate is aware of extenuating circumstances prior to or on the day of the examination, they should decide whether to sign the declaration notice and attempt Step Two (legal knowledge examination) or not attend/undertake the examination.

## **Step Three: Assessment against rank-specific competencies and matching to vacancies**

- 9.10 Although an officer may lodge an in-force appeal at NPPF Step One and Four, most appeals are likely to follow the running of an in-force Step Three assessment process. In publicising a forthcoming Step Three process, forces should inform candidates of the appeal process and the grounds upon which an appeal will be accepted. Such action will allow officers to understand what will or will not fall within an appeal and limit the number of unnecessary appeals.
- 9.11 Fairness at work/grievance procedures are separate procedures but may be submitted by an officer and investigated alongside an appeal. However, an appeal should not be delayed while other issues are being considered. In determining the outcome of an appeal, a force may take into consideration any information

identified in another process but will do so only if they are of the view it is relevant to the criteria upon which the appeal was accepted.

- 9.11.1 As noted at [section 4.5](#), an officer must be within the five-year validity period when they **participate** at NPPF Step Three. Consequently, an appeal that is accepted by the force will, for the **purposes of calculating validity time only**, commence as of the participation date. This does not impact on any other timeline for completion of the appeal process. In some cases an officer may be outside of their validity period when the results of the Step Three are published. But providing the appeal is accepted by the force, it can be supported as discussed above.
- 9.11.2 As previously discussed an officer has five years less one day from the date they passed the NPPF legal knowledge exam to be selected at NPPF Step Three. The validity period is calculated on calendar days, not working days. The rationale behind this requirement is that all officers have exactly the same time available to them, but this period cannot be extended beyond the five years. However, periods of time where an officer was prevented from preparing or applying for a Step Three process may be returned to the officer.
- 9.11.3 An officer who has lodged an appeal cannot (unless they withdraw that appeal) participate in a new Step Three process should the force announce one. This is because an officer cannot be in two parts of the NPPF at the same time. Therefore any period within the appeal will be managed as follows:
- If an appeal is not accepted by a force, the validity period will be deemed to have continued uninterrupted. Where relevant, the officer will retain any remaining validity period from their Step Two pass but no additional time will be added.
  - Where an appeal is accepted by a force but not supported, the period of time between the Step Three **participation** date and the **appeal decision** date will be added to the validity period. Where relevant, the officer will retain any



remaining validity period from their Step Two pass and the recalculated time will follow on from the end of the original validity period. The force must provide the details and dates of the validity extension to the College of Policing so records are accurate regarding validity extensions.

- Where an appeal is accepted by a force and is supported, the officer will move to NPPF Step Three. The period of time between the **participation** date and the **appeal decision** date will be added to the original validity period and banked. Officers may use the recalculated validity period if they are unexpectedly unable to move from Step Three to Step Four or fail to complete NPPF Step Four. The force must provide the details and dates of the validity extension to the College of Policing so records are accurate regarding validity extensions.

## **Step Four: Temporary promotion and work-based assessment**

- 9.12 Forces must apply the in-force appeals procedure at this step. Fairness at work and/or grievance procedures may also be invoked for both the assessment of units and assessment of performance. The force's appeals procedure must adhere to the requirements of the relevant awarding body for assessing, accrediting and certifying RQF units.

Where an appeal against not giving substantive promotion is based on performance or attendance, the force appeals process must be used. If the candidate wishes to appeal on how the RQF units were assessed, the matter may be reported to the awarding body for consideration.

- 9.13 In exceptional circumstances, for example interruption to active participation in Step Four, the following questions may be considered:
- Was the candidate aware of the likelihood of interruption to the period of temporary promotion at the time they applied for selection at Step Three?

- Has the candidate worked consistently to gather evidence for the RQF units, or has this been left to the last opportunity?
- Does any legislation cover the type of interruption to their temporary promotion, for example employment law or equality legislation?

## **Extending the length of work-based assessment**

- 9.14 It is not appropriate to routinely extend a temporary promotion for a further 12 months. In some cases a shorter period (eg, a further two months) is more appropriate. Each case needs to be considered individually.
- 9.15 The 12-month period will not be extended due to high volumes of work or operational commitments. Police officers deal with operational commitments as part of their daily routine and the learning units have been selected with this in mind.
- 9.16 The decision to extend a candidate's period of work-based assessment beyond 12 months must be evidence-based, justifiable and documented. When considering an extension, forces should take into account any extenuating circumstances (see [9.2](#) and [9.4](#)), the assessor's judgement and the line manager's recommendation. Forces should establish a central decision-making panel to consider such applications on their behalf.
- 9.17 If during Step Four it appears that a candidate may not reach the required standard, they must be informed of the reasons and an action plan put in place. Candidates and forces must take into consideration the time limit for completing work-based assessment, which we suggest should be a maximum of 24 months, but may be extended in certain extenuating circumstances.
- 9.17.1 Extenuating circumstances are exceptional, unforeseeable circumstances which affect a candidate's ability to complete the work-based assessment. Extenuating circumstances should be reserved for candidates with a genuine, significant and

demonstrable negative impact. Forces may also need to consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010, for example, in relation to providing an extension of time as a reasonable adjustment, if appropriate. Candidates should highlight any extenuating circumstances as soon as is practicable to their force.

- 9.18 If the candidate still does not succeed in reaching the appropriate standard, they must be removed from Step Four, informed of the reasons for removal and supported by a development action plan. The candidate must wait for 12 months from the date they revert to their substantive rank before they can make a further attempt at Step Three. They must still be within the validity period at Step Two to be eligible to retake Step Three. Candidates who do not have a sufficient validity period remaining must be referred to Step One.

### **Part-time candidates in Step Four**

Part-time officers seeking promotion to the rank of sergeant or inspector must complete the required learning units. The period of time allocated to achieve the units should be offered on a pro-rata basis. For example, someone who works exactly 50% of full-time hours would have 24 months in which to complete the units.

- 9.19.1 However, part-time candidates may be substantively promoted once they have completed 12 calendar months of temporary promotion, providing they have achieved all of the required learning units and have satisfactorily evidenced performance in the rank. Any extension to the temporary promotion must also be granted on a pro-rata basis commensurate with the part-time hours worked.
- 9.19.2 This exemption does not apply to candidates who work full-time hours but under a flexible working agreement.

## **Career management**

- 9.20 NPPF Steps Three and Four are managed in-force and candidates should follow their own force's procedures.
- 9.21 An officer may, if they wish, take NPPF Step Two during pregnancy, after an individual risk assessment by their own force. Forces must comply with the section of the NPPF Step Two Candidate Handbook document dealing with pregnant officers.

## **Reasonable adjustments**

- 9.22 The Equality Act 2010 allows for a reasonable adjustment to be made for those with a disability. In the majority of cases, reasonable adjustments will be sought and, where appropriate, made at NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge exam). However, a reasonable adjustment can be made at any of the steps of the NPPF.
- 9.23 Candidates with a disability may apply for reasonable adjustments. Forces are responsible for reviewing a request for adjustments at Step One, Three and Four in line with force policy. The College of Policing will review any application for reasonable adjustments at Step Two. The procedure for this is outlined in the NPPF Step Two Candidate Handbook and Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

## 10 High Potential Development and Fast Track entry schemes

- 10.1 Candidates on the HPDS must go through all steps of the NPPF, with the exception of Step Three. On completing Step Two, HPDS candidates deemed ready for promotion to sergeant or inspector must be prioritised where a suitable promotion vacancy arises.
- 10.2 An HPDS candidate can submit a promotion assessment form at any stage when they feel ready, but can only proceed once they are successful at Step Two (legal knowledge examination). In effect, this process replaces Step Three for HPDS candidates. The line manager can recommend promotion based on this evidence and their own knowledge of the individual. If agreed by the chief officer or nominee in-force, the candidate can be temporarily promoted and undertake Step Four.
- 10.3 The Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 allow for HPDS officers to be temporarily promoted and commence Step Four, even though a place may not be available in terms of force establishment figures. Only where there are concerns as to the ability of the HPDS candidate (which are reviewed by the promotion assessment form) should an HPDS candidate be withheld from commencing Step Four.
- 10.4 As with non-HPDS candidates, HPDS candidates will be temporarily promoted to the aspired rank for a period of 12 months and assessed against the Qualification and Credit Framework units or NVQ units for that rank. As the HPDS process is time-limited, candidates should pass through the various stages without unnecessary delay. A candidate should not be required to retake any module where they have previously been assessed as attaining the required standard. A requirement to retake a module to provide additional evidence can only be made if there is a robust case to do so and it is in line with the awarding bodies' regulations on evidence and achievement. Delays in accessing Step Four or any of the assessments within the work-based assessment must be avoided.

- 10.5     Apart from exemption from NPPF Step Three, HPDS candidates should be treated the same as other candidates – that is, with no guarantee of substantive promotion unless performance merits a pass and subject to the same assessment methods. If a HPDS candidate is removed at Step Four, they must wait for 12 months from the date they revert to their substantive rank before they can make a further attempt at Step Three by resubmitting a promotion assessment form, if still a part of the HPDS. If they are outside the HPDS scheme, then the candidate can apply for selection at Step Three alongside non-HPDS candidates, again only after 12 months from the date they revert to their substantive rank. They must be supported with a development plan during this period.

# 11 Constable to Inspector Fast Track Programme

- 11.1 Fast Track programme members must go through all steps of the NPPF, with the exception of Step Three.
- 11.2 Fast Track officers do not have to complete Step Three of the NPPF and are prioritised at Step Four over and above other officers, even if there are limited places. This means that although Fast Track officers are required to meet the same standards, they can progress more quickly than normal promotion opportunities may allow, while demonstrating the appropriate level of competence.
- 11.3 Furthermore, the promotion of a Fast Track officer is, by regulation, not subject to or affected by vacancies. Therefore, subject to being appropriately qualified as set out above, officers will be promoted to temporary sergeant at the start of year two, substantive sergeant at the start of year three and then, upon successfully completing the programme, temporary inspector. Apart from exceptional personal circumstances, there is no provision to delay these promotion timescales. Should an officer fail to gain promotion, this will trigger their removal from the programme, at which point they will revert to a standard track career path.

## Step One

The purpose of this step is to ensure suitability to enter the promotion process. Candidates accepted onto the Fast Track programme who are supported by their force will be considered as meeting the NPPF Step One eligibility criteria.

As such, they may register for the NPPF promotion process. This includes officers during their 12-month probationary period and substantive constables joining the programme. Officers should submit applications to register for NPPF at Step One via the FEO.

## Step Two

Candidates, even though they hold the rank of constable, will be entered into the sergeant to inspector NPPF Step Two legal knowledge examination.

The purpose of this step is to ensure appropriate legal knowledge relevant to the ranks of sergeant and inspector. The pass requirement in the Inspectors' NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) is an absolute standard (set pass mark). Those officers who achieve a score equal to or above the set pass mark are awarded a pass. To remain on the programme, Fast Track officers must achieve the required pass mark of 65% (or above) in the NPPF Step Two Inspectors' examination.

Officers achieving between 55% and below 65%, subject to their chief officer's approval, will be given the opportunity to remain on the programme. Such officers will be provided a retake opportunity in year two.

Those officers who are already Sergeants' NPPF Step Two or OSPRE® Part I qualified and fail to score above 55% will be given the opportunity to remain on the programme subject to the approval of their chief officer lead. Such officers will be provided a retake opportunity in year two.

Failure to achieve 65% at the second attempt will result in removal from the programme, reverting to the substantive rank achieved at that point and to a standard track career path.

If candidates reach the standard required for the Inspectors' exam (65%) then they will be considered to have passed both examinations. If candidates reach the standard required for the Sergeants exam (55%) but not the standard required for the Inspectors' (65%) they will be considered to have passed the Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Exam.



## **Step Three**

The local selection process does not apply to Fast Track officers. A Fast Track officer will submit a promotion assessment report (PAR) during the final year of the Fast Track programme. The PAR process replaces Step Three and progress is dependent on line manager recommendation and agreement by senior management within the home force.

## **Step Four**

Officers who attain 55% or higher at NPPF Step Two will be temporarily promoted to the rank of sergeant and commence the 12-month work-based assessment for that rank. Following substantive promotion to the rank of sergeant, Fast Track candidates are eligible to apply for temporary promotion to the rank of inspector. On being temporarily promoted to the rank of inspector, candidates must commence the 12-month work-based assessment for that rank.

## 12 Direct Entry Inspector

The Direct Entry Inspector programme sits outside of the NPPF but candidates within that programme are required to comply, in part, with the NPPF.

Unlike all other candidates, Direct Entry inspectors commence their service at the rank of inspector. Although the manner in which they are required to comply with the NPPF differs from all other candidates, programme completion and completion of their probationary period is in part dependent on the NPPF. Failure to attain the required standard will result in the removal of the officer from the Direct Entry programme.

### Step One

Candidates accepted onto the Direct Entry Inspector programme, and who are supported by their force, will be considered as meeting the Step One eligibility criteria. Candidates must register with the College of Policing to undertake Step Two.

### Step Two

Candidates will hold the rank of inspector and will be entered into the inspector NPPF Step Two legal knowledge examination approximately 11 months into their programme. Officers attaining 65% or above in the examination will move to NPPF Step Four. Direct Entry inspectors are afforded a second attempt at the examination should they fail to achieve the required standard at the first opportunity.

### Step Three

The local selection process does not apply to Direct Entry inspectors.

### Step Four

Officers who attain 65% or higher at NPPF Step Two for Inspector will commence the work-based assessment for that rank.

## 13 Rejoining the police service

Officers rejoining the police service sit outside of the NPPF. However, officers returning to the police service at a higher rank than they left and to the ranks of sergeant and inspector are required to comply, in part, with the NPPF.

Unlike all other officers, rejoiners to the ranks of sergeant and inspector will recommence their service at the rank to which they applied to rejoin. Rejoiners will not undertake the NPPF steps in the usual order, however they will still be required to undertake the Step Two legal examination for the relevant rank as well as complete the Step Four work-based assessment. Rejoiners are provided with two opportunities to pass the relevant Step Two legal examination; if the officer fails to attain the required standard there may be grounds to invoke Regulation 13 of the Police Regulations 2003 dispensing of the officer's services.

### Step One

Rejoiner members will be considered as meeting the Step One eligibility criteria. Candidates must register with the College of Policing to undertake Step Two.

### Step Two

Rejoiner members required to undertake the knowledge examination at the rank of sergeant or inspector will hold that rank at point of re-entry. Officers meeting the required standard for the legal knowledge examination at 55% for sergeants or 65% for inspectors will move to NPPF Step Four. Those rejoiner members failing to meet the required standard will be afforded one opportunity to resit, and this must be done at the earliest opportunity.

### Step Three

The local selection process does not apply to rejoiner members.

## **Step Four**

Officers attaining the required standard or higher at NPPF Step Two will commence the 12-month work-based assessment for that rank. Those awaiting a resit opportunity will not be prevented from commencing Step Four ahead of completion of Step Two.

## 14 OSPRE I and II qualified candidates

- 14.1 Most forces will have a number of officers who have previously completed the OSPRE promotion process and as such are qualified for promotion. Subject to meeting any local selection criteria, these officers are qualified to apply at Step Three. If selected, they should be substantively promoted as explained at [section 6.10](#) above.
- 14.2 The primary function of the Step Three process is to select in open competition the very best candidates who show potential for operating at the next rank. As such, both the NPPF Step Two qualified candidates and the OSPRE I and II qualified candidates should be assessed in a single Step Three process.
- 14.3 Chief officers may hold separate selection events if they wish, but the process and questions in each event must be identical and not provide an advantage to one group over the other. Equally, candidates cannot be prioritised over the other because they have participated in a particular promotion route. Adopting such practice is not only ethically unsound but may lead to legal challenge.

## 15 Equality impact assessment – information to forces

The NPPF was subject to a wide-ranging equality impact assessment where a number of issues were identified. While these were not discriminatory, they have the potential to put some officers at a disadvantage.

The full College-based equality impact assessment is published on the College website.

## 16 Contact details

The website address for the National Police Promotion Framework is: [college.police.uk/career-learning/career-development/national-police-promotion-framework](https://college.police.uk/career-learning/career-development/national-police-promotion-framework)

Policy contact: Professional Development team

College of Policing

Units 1-6 Citadel Place

Tinworth Street

London SE11 5EF

[nppf.enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nppf.enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk)

# Appendix 1 – Guidance for development of appeals policy for use in assessment

## Policy guidance – appeals and assessment

### Scope

This guidance provides information and guidance surrounding the creation of an appeals policy for use in the College of Policing (the College) assessment processes. For example, work-based assessment, assessment centres and exams. While this has been created for internal College products, it can also be used by other organisations delivering assessments. It is important to note that if an organisation or business unit is working with an awarding organisation, for example when conducting work-based assessments, they should verify that their internal procedures align with those specified by the awarding organisation.

### Design

The recommended steps involved in designing an appeals policy are as follows:

- Consult with relevant individuals, for example those who will be managing an appeals process, representative information and potential candidates, to determine key inclusion material pertinent to that process, such as timescales and required format of appeal. This will ensure any information is accurate and any actions required by the College are achievable.
- Complete an equality impact assessment to ensure the policy is fair and objective. A thorough legal review should also be undertaken to confirm that the policy is legally compliant.
- Policies should be reviewed on a yearly basis or when the products that it refers to are amended, whichever is sooner.

When a candidate submits an appeal, or is considering submitting one, it is possible that they will be in a vulnerable state, for example angry or

upset. It is therefore important to ensure that all documentation is clear, simple to read and unambiguous. Candidates should be able to easily confirm the following:

- If what they are concerned with constitutes an appeal.
- If so, what steps they need to take.
- Timescales they have in which to submit an appeal.
- Expected communication and timescales of communication from the College, for example acknowledgment of appeal.

The College's [\*\*Diversity and Inclusion\*\*](#) team has created a guidance document and a template to facilitate the creation of a policy and to also provide guidance on specific policies. In addition to this, it is emphasised that an appeals policy should be transparent and clear and additionally should highlight the independence of those dealing with appeals. By having a clear, transparent approach, this demonstrates an open and fair approach, which is in line with the College's Code of Ethics.

## **Policy content**

Within an appeal policy, information surrounding the following areas should be included. Prior to being assessed, candidates should also be informed of this information to provide a transparent and fair process. This could be presented to candidates in the form of information packs, which also detail full information about their impending assessment. This information could also be provided online.

## **Behaviour and manner**

It is recommended that any policy outlines behaviours expected from individuals dealing with the appeals processes. An example is below:

- It is prompt, simple, accessible and treats you with respect and sensitivity.
- It has regard to individual needs and requirements.
- It provides you with clear and complete information on the appeals process, how to escalate your complaint and keeps you informed at every stage.
- It uses everyday language and gives honest explanations, reasons



for decisions and offers apologies when necessary.

- It uses appeals to understand what we can do better and as a means to improve our work.
- It treats all our customers fairly and without discrimination.

(Adapted from [college.police.uk/contact](https://college.police.uk/contact))

Individual business units may want to include other behaviours relevant to them to complement these.

## Enquiries

Enquiries are typically when a candidate is asking a question surrounding a part of their assessment process. For example, questioning why a certain process was used, or why they scored what they did. They are not asking for any specific action, for example a re-mark or review of their work.

Enquiries are **not** the same as an appeal and business units should have their own guidance on how best to respond to such enquiries.

## Reasonable adjustments

Business units should have their own policy regarding reasonable adjustments and assessment. This should sit separate to the appeals policy, however it is still pertinent to make reference to reasonable adjustments within an appeals policy to ensure fairness and transparency. Under the Equality Act 2010 there is a duty to make adjustments where a person with a disability would be at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter (eg, exam, assessment) in comparison with persons who are not considered to have such a disability. According to the Act, 'a person (P) has a disability if – (a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and (b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. As well as being a legal requirement, such elements of fairness and respect are key parts of the College's Code of Ethics.

Therefore, the candidate needs to be presented with a clear opportunity to submit a request for a reasonable adjustment. Candidates should be told how to apply, and what needs to be included in a request for adjustment. Clear timescales for submissions should be stated to

candidates. It should be made clear that late submission may mean that an adjustment cannot be arranged in time. In such cases the individual will have to defer their assessment, or be assessed without an adjustment. In cases of the latter, the individual will have to sign a **'fit to sit' declaration**, meaning that they cannot appeal on the basis of not receiving an adjustment.

Sufficient time should be allowed to enable a candidate to collect the required evidence. Deadlines should also allow the College sufficient time to review and respond to any requests. When awarding any adjustments, it should be made clear to candidates that by accepting such adjustments, they cannot appeal on the basis of not receiving sufficient adjustment for their requirements. If candidates feel they need a different adjustment, they will need to contact the College in sufficient time before their assessment.

Sometimes, there are instances where a candidate requires an accommodation. This is likely to be in cases where they have a condition that does not meet the definition of a disability. While adjustments result in a physical change to the assessment in some way (eg, extra time, being allowed use of a spell-checker) to not disadvantage a candidate, an accommodation does not change the nature of the assessment. For example, an accommodation could be allowing a candidate to sit nearer a door, or using a coloured overlay. It is necessary to consider the cost and logistical impact of supporting any accommodations. It is also necessary to ensure that candidates given accommodations are not given an unfair advantage. For these reasons, all requests should be considered on an individual basis.

## Acceptable appeals

A clear explanation of an acceptable appeal will provide clarification of what an appeal actually is to candidates. While there is no common definition of an appeal, it is generally considered to be when somebody is taking action against an incident relating to assessment. It differs from an enquiry as when somebody appeals, they are often seeking a change or specific action to be taken.

This explanation should allow them to clearly distinguish the difference between an appeal and an enquiry, and therefore the relevance of the policy to them.

It may reduce the number of candidates appealing as what will and what will not be accepted as grounds for appeal is clearly articulated. Therefore candidates may be less likely to appeal for the wrong reasons, as the grounds are already clearly set out. If a candidate does still appeal on grounds that are not acceptable, they can be referred back to the policy, which should clearly explain why their appeal is not suitable and therefore will not give them any leeway to further discuss unsuitable appeals. In addition, fewer appeals or candidate queries regarding appeals will likely reduce staff time needed to respond.

Information surrounding appeals should be communicated to individuals at the same time as giving them other information about their assessment. This is commonly given in the form of a candidate handbook. Individuals should also be given full information surrounding reasonable adjustments and extenuating circumstances. By providing clear information to the candidates up front, a lot of candidate queries can be avoided, as individuals should have all the information they need in a clear, concise format.

## **Extenuating circumstances**

It is accepted that events may happen that could potentially affect a candidate's performance. Extenuating circumstances are those that are unpredictable, outside the individual's control, happen during or shortly before an assessment and are expected to have a significant impact on the individual. Examples may include the death of a close relative and serious personal illness.

Examples of what is not considered an extenuating circumstance include minor illness, transport problems, computer failure and having a heavy workload.

Where an individual has an extenuating circumstance, they are invited to submit an extenuating circumstances form. This will include evidence of the circumstance. Business units should have their own procedures surrounding extenuating circumstances and develop a policy decision (Policy Guidance – Appeals and Assessment) for the respective business unit whether or not to accept extenuating circumstances.

## **'Fit to Sit'**

All candidates should sign a Fit to Sit declaration. By signing this, it confirms they are fit to be assessed, and, as such, there are no known extenuating circumstances or a need for a reasonable adjustment. Or if there are, they are still happy to be assessed, and therefore waive their right to appeal based on the circumstance.

## **Procedural errors**

While rare, occasionally unscheduled events can happen that can affect the assessment procedure and, in turn, performance. For example, a fire alarm going off in the middle of the assessment or incorrect examination timing. Procedures should be in place for assessment staff to record such information. Such information should be reviewed to determine whether assessment results would have been different had the event not happened. This should happen automatically, therefore appeals related to such events should not be accepted. It is at the discretion of the business unit to accept unscheduled incidents. To maintain a fair and objective process,

this should be communicated clearly to candidates before their assessment.

## **Possible outcomes**

Detailed in this section should be examples, and justification of, possible outcomes from an appeal. If the business unit has any specific actions it will not sanction, for example a re-mark, this should be clearly outlined and justified to allow for an objective, open approach.

The following are possible outcomes that may be contained within an appeals policy:

- No action taken.
- Additional marks rewarded.
- Allow an opportunity to resit.
- Wipe assessment attempt from the record.
- Provide feedback to individuals related to the appeal (eg, invigilators, site coordinator, assessors).

It is highlighted that not all of the above outcomes will be appropriate for every process. Consideration should be made as to the most relevant and appropriate outcome for each process. Options should be considered with regards to suitability for the process to maintain the integrity of the assessment, ensuring a fair process to all candidates.

## **Stages**

Clear timescales should be detailed so that the appeals process is objective and fair. This should be accompanied by clear steps an individual must take at each stage. Consideration should be given to allow candidates to raise issues informally prior to invoking the formal appeals process, with the aim of resolving them. There are two stages of the appeals process. If and when stage two has been exhausted, this is the end of the appeals process. This should be made clear to all candidates.

It should be made clear that appeals submitted outside the timescales will not be considered. This is to allow an objective approach.

## Stage one

This stage is when a candidate first wishes to submit an appeal. It should be made clear that a submission will be considered void if it is clear that the circumstances claimed are not considered to constitute sufficient grounds for an appeal. In this section it should outline:

- the steps a candidate should take in the first instance – for example, contact staff present at the assessment delivery or their work-based assessment lead
- the form this contact should take – verbal, written, etc
- whether or not an individual should expect an acknowledgement of submitting an appeal
- who will be involved at this stage in determining whether or not to accept the appeal
- any appeal submission deadlines (eg, before results are released)
- any timescales – such as when the candidate should expect a response and the format of such a response

The first stage is the candidate's first opportunity to raise an appeal. Candidates often have a limited window to make an appeal and this is usually very soon after the event. By providing clear documentation and guidance, this can help to increase candidate experience of the process, and potentially, in turn, of the police service and the College.

A review of an appeal should be undertaken by an individual independent of the assessment process, to demonstrate clear objectivity and fairness. All candidates should be informed that any appeals will be reviewed by an individual independent of the assessment process, demonstrating a fair, open approach.

Where a reasonable adjustment has been granted, the format of submitting an appeal may vary at the discretion of the project lead, however the rest of the factors (timescales etc.) still stand.

The appeals process will be deemed complete if:

- Review of the evidence results in an appeal being upheld (and the candidate is satisfied with the outcome).
- An appeal will be considered void if it meets any of the below criteria, and, as such, the process will be deemed complete.
- It is submitted outside the given timescales.
- It is not considered sufficient grounds for appeal (eg, appeal submitted as individual had a lot of work on at the time of the assessment).
- It does not meet the criteria of an appeal (eg, is an enquiry).

The appeals process is not complete if any of the following conditions are met. In such cases, stage two should be implemented:

- If an appeal is upheld and the individual is not satisfied with the outcome.
- Evidence not available when submitting initial appeal is now available (eg, medical evidence supporting an individual's submission).

## **Stage two**

This stage should only be used when stage one has been completed and an individual is not satisfied with the outcome of a successful appeal or if there is evidence (eg, medical) to support an appeal that was not available in the required submission timescales.

As with stage one, individuals should be made aware of the steps they need to take to submit an appeal. This includes:

- Who they need to contact.
- The method by which to contact the above.
- What they need to include in the stage two appeal.
- Policy Guidance – Appeals and Assessment.
- The time in which they have to submit a stage two appeal.
- If they will receive an acknowledgment of submitting an appeal.

- Who will be involved.
- When and how they will be notified of the appeal outcomes.
- Potential outcomes.

The business unit's processes with regard to dealing with an appeal at this stage should be made clear. For example, many exam bodies have an independent panel review at this stage. It is important that an appeals policy should clearly show what the ultimate stage is and highlight that decisions at this stage are final. It should be made clear that the appeal will be reviewed by a different person(s) from stage one, to ensure a fair and objective approach.

## **Summary**

While policies should be created in line with the College's official template, this document has provided guidance as to the content of a policy surrounding appeals within an assessment context. Table 1 provides a summary checklist of items.

## **External policies reviewed**

In creating this documentation, a number of appeals policies and guidance were reviewed to benchmark against. External policies associated with City and Guilds, University of Nottingham, University of St. Andrews, Army Reserves, Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply, and Goldsmiths, University of London were reviewed.

Example checklist of what should be included in an appeals policy:

Explanation of:

- what process(es) the policy is for
- what constitutes an appeal
- what steps an individual needs to take
- timescales in which an appeal has to be submitted
- required format of an appeal
- expected communication and timescales of communication from the College



- behaviour expected from individuals dealing with the appeals policies
- enquiries
- reasonable adjustments
- acceptable appeals
- extenuating circumstances
- procedural errors
- possible outcomes
- appeals stages
- final stage/when decision will be final
- conduct
- legal review
- equality impact assessment
- yearly review of policy or review whenever assessment has changed (whichever is sooner)



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## About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

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.

[college.police.uk](https://college.police.uk)



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