

## **Medical and Fitness**

Police Now, and the partner forces we work with, take pride in recruiting the best graduates to become neighbourhood police officers and trainee detective constables in the most challenging and deprived areas. These are roles which can often be tough and demanding and therefore it is important all new recruits are fit and healthy.

If successful in receiving a conditional offer for one of our programmes, we ensure your suitability for the role through the pre-employment check process by asking you to complete a Medical Health Questionnaire and arranging for you to see a nurse and/or doctor for a consultation. You will also perform a Job-Related Fitness Test (JRFT).

The information given in this document is a guide to how you could improve your health and fitness in order to give yourself the best chance of passing these assessments.

## **Medical assessment**

At the medical assessment, the force Occupational Health nurse or doctor will check your hearing, eyesight, blood pressure, height and weight, and breathing. Your fingerprints may also be taken, as well as a sample of DNA.

You need to be able to manage day-to-day life in a policing role without a problem and it is expected you won't be regularly having sick days off work. However, if you need regular medication to stay healthy, you may still be accepted, if you can provide evidence of being able to manage this yourself. Every candidate receives a detailed individual assessment, and police forces can accept candidates with many common health conditions, as long as they are under control. However, if you can't carry out the role safely without putting your own health at risk, or you can't meet some of the core requirements, you will not be found fit for the job.

No one is rejected because of a medical label. The Equality Act 2010 covers all police forces and if you have a disability, adjustments will be made if it is reasonable to do so.

If you have a health problem, or you've recently had a lot of time off, you should bring a copy of your medical records or a note from your doctor with you to your medical assessment.

## **Hearing**

You need to be able to hear your colleagues, members of the public, and a radio in noisy surroundings and therefore you need good hearing to be fit for the job. As well as those who have no problem with hearing, forces will also consider candidates who wear hearing aids and those who are deaf in one ear. All candidates whose hearing is below the ideal level get a specialist review by an audiologist to decide whether they are suitable for the role.

You are likely to be unfit for entry to the Police Service if you have a hearing capability deficit as it compromises your capability as an officer and poses potential risk to the wider public. The standard you must be able to hear is **84dB at 0.5, 1 and 2 KHz and/or 140 dB at 3, 4 and 6 KHz.**

Make sure to protect your ears from too much noise, especially for two days before the medical: don't ride a motorbike, work with noisy tools or go to any music gigs. You can also ask your practice nurse to check that your ears are clear of wax.

## Eyesight

Police forces follow national Home Office guidelines for entry into the Police Service in respect to eyesight.

You may have seen a chart like the diagram on the right at your optician's. The actual chart is much larger and is read from six metres away. Each line equates to a standard.

A	6/60
BC	6/36
DEFG	6/24
HIJKLM	6/18
NOPQRSTU	6/12
VWXYZABCD	6/9
EFGHIJKLMNO PQ	6/6
RSTUVWXYZABCDEF	6/5

As part of your medical assessment, you will need to show capability of the following standards:

### Distance vision

- 6/12 or better with either your right or left eye, with or without glasses or contact lenses.
- 6/6 with both eyes together, with or without glasses or contact lenses.
- Corrected low contrast distance visual acuity must be 6/12 or better for a 10% contrast target, binocularly.

### Near vision

- Near visual acuity is the ability to see clearly objects and fine detail at 36 inches or less.
- 6/9 with both eyes together, with or without glasses or contact lenses.

### Visual field

- A view of at least 120 degrees horizontally by 100 degrees vertically.
- Free or any large defective areas, particularly in the fovea.
- Defects smaller than the physiological blind spot will be acceptable.

- Multiple defects that add to an area smaller than the physiological blind spot, should be acceptable.

## **Colour vision**

- Monochromats are not accepted (complete colour deficiency).
- Mild anomalous trichromats are acceptable in standard policing roles.
- Severe anomalous dichromats and trichromats are likely to be accepted for some policing roles but you will need to be aware of the deficiency and be making appropriate adjustments.
- The use of colour correcting lenses is not acceptable.

## **Eye surgery**

- Radial keratotomy, arcuate keratotomy or corneal grafts are not acceptable.
- Other forms of refractive surgery such as LASIK, LASEK, PRK, ICRS and cataract surgery are all acceptable provided that six weeks have elapsed since surgery, there are no residual side effects other than a reduction in low light level visual performance and the other eyesight standards are met.
- After any eye surgery, you may be asked to provide a report from an optician.

## **Blood Pressure**

During the medical assessment your blood pressure will be measured which shouldn't be too high or too low.

High blood pressure (hypertension) is a major risk factor for strokes, heart failures and chronic kidney disease amongst other conditions. If you present with stage 1+ hypertension (daily average of 135/85 mmHg or higher or clinic reading of 140/90 mmHg) you will not be able to undertake the fitness test without your GP investigating and reporting back regarding a sustained and acceptable control of the condition. Once your GP has identified that your condition is adequately controlled you will be able to progress with your application.

Sustained and untreatable hypertension is not compatible with an active policing role due to the cardiovascular risk and performance compromise it invokes.

## **Body mass index**

Your BMI, which is calculated from your height and weight, needs to be in the healthy to overweight range. If your BMI is below 18 or above 30 (or 32 for the Metropolitan Police Service) you will likely not be accepted; however, body fat can also be measured. If it is likely you will need many months to lose the weight/fat required, your application will be rejected on

medical grounds. It is never too soon to review your lifestyle, so make sure that you have a healthy diet and take regular exercise.

### **Smoking**

The medical team tests lung function and blood pressure as part of the health assessment and smokers are more likely to have abnormal scores in these tests. You are more likely to pass the medical and fitness tests if you quit smoking as soon as possible or at the very least, cut back.

### **Recreational drugs and substance misuse**

Drugs, such as cannabis, ecstasy, and cocaine, are against the law and must never be used by police officers. Police forces test for substance misuse during the recruitment process and regularly while in service. You must avoid all illegal drugs, even as a one-off use, as this will come back in your test results and remain on your record whether or not you are ultimately employed.

### **Job-related fitness test (JRFT)**

The job-related fitness test (JRFT) looks to see whether you are fit for the job and are ready for Officer Safety Training (OST), where you will learn to protect yourself and others.

The test involves being measured on your running and is more commonly known as a Multi Stage Shuttle Test or Bleep Test. The Bleep Test is a 15-metre shuttle run and you must be able to complete it to an endurance level of 5.4.

If you are not able to pass the fitness test on your first attempt, a retake can be arranged after six weeks. However, please note that forces will only allow up to three attempts before your conditional offer is withdrawn.

To ensure you pass, try and improve your fitness before you come for your assessment. Try to train regularly and monitor your progress through recording times taken, distances covered and recovery times, as this will give you feedback on improvement and an incentive to continue training. Set yourself targets that can be realistically achieved to help motivate you but don't overdo it, make sure you start gently and build up gradually over a period of weeks or even months.

You should not do shuttle runs to train, but instead periodically assess your progress by testing yourself. To do this, you need to find a 15-metre track, perhaps at a local sports hall or running track and download a recording of the Multi Stage Shuttle Test which is readily available

online. You should run to your optimum level without reaching exhaustion and will need to reach a minimum of four shuttles at level 5 to pass the fitness test.

Many training programmes are available online and you should choose one that suits you best. We have outlined below just one example guide of how you could start training with a seven-day plan. Make sure you always stretch and warm up properly before exercising and cool down afterwards, making sure you are hydrated throughout. If you were to follow this schedule for six weeks you should have no difficulty passing the Bleep Test. Please note, if you are not a regular exerciser it is always worth seeking medical advice before starting any fitness routine.

- Monday – 20 mins run in a local area or at a track.
- Tuesday – exercise session of your choice.
- Wednesday – 30 mins run in a local area or at a track.
- Thursday – rest.
- Friday – repeat Monday or Wednesday.
- Saturday – exercise session of your choice.
- Sunday – rest.

