

High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) Selection Process 2009



Results and Analysis Report Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The revised High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) is a core part of the leadership strategy for the Police Service. The HPDS aims to identify and develop officers with the potential to become senior leaders of the future.
2. The overall aim of the HPDS Selection Process is to identify a cohort of officers who have demonstrated the potential to become effective senior leaders in the future. It is anticipated that those selected as showing high potential at will reach at least superintendent rank. The process is open to applicants from all Home Office forces in England, Wales, and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) as well as applicants from States of Jersey Police and the British Transport Police (BTP).
3. Overall, 311 formal applications were received for the High Potential Development Scheme in 2009. The HPDS Selection Process was split into three stages.
4. Stage 1 of the HPDS Selection Process comprised of an in-force assessment utilising a national application form and guidance provided by the NPIA. This assessment was conducted by the applicants' force. 171 (55.0%) were supported by their force as eligible and suitable for the HPDS at this stage.
5. Three applicants withdrew or were withdrawn from the process before Stage 2 and hence only 168 applicants undertook the four ability tests at Stage 2. The tests assessed verbal reasoning (Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal), numerical reasoning (Rust Advanced Numerical Reasoning Appraisal), abstract reasoning (Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices) and managerial situational judgement (Scenarios). These tests were chosen as performance on tests of this type has been shown to predict managerial ability. In addition, all four tests had also previously been used as part of a selection process involving police officers of

superintending ranks; the target level associated with the HPDS Selection Process.

6. In 2008, the ability tests were used to sift applicants before Stage 3, the Assessment Centre. However, in 2009 all applicants successful at Stage 1 were invited to attend both Stages 2 (ability tests) and 3 (Assessment Centre).
7. A further five applicants withdrew from the process prior to Stage 3. The remaining 163 applicants undertook five exercises at the Assessment Centre. These exercises were used to assess their potential and suitability against the behavioural competency areas of the generic Superintendent Rank Profile within the Integrated Competency Framework (ICF). The five exercises were: Written Exercise, Group Exercise, Interactive Exercise, Oral Briefing and Interview. Applicants were assessed by trained assessors. The assessors' role was to ultimately identify whether the candidate met the standard and should be 'Recommended' or 'Not Recommended' for the HPDS.
8. The ability tests completed at Stage 2 were included in the decision making process and they contributed approximately one sixth of the overall assessment process performance.
9. The selection process aimed to select approximately 60 officers for the HPDS in 2009. 54 applicants were recommended by the assessors. The recommendation was ratified and the 54 recommended candidates were therefore successful in gaining a place on the HPDS.
10. In conducting analysis between groups of applicants' success rates, there were on occasion too few applicants in a group to provide a meaningful and reliable analysis. Where it was possible to conduct this analysis, this is reported. It should be noted that where the number of applicants in any group is low, care should be taken to avoid over-inferring or

generalising from this data. The larger the group sizes, the more confidence there can be in the reliability of the results.

11. Some applicants did not provide all the information requested on the biographical monitoring form. Therefore there are a number of categories where biographical information is missing. Furthermore, some candidates withdrew from the process between stages and therefore this should be borne in mind.
12. With 54 successful candidates, the overall success rate for the endorsed candidates in the 2009 HPDS Selection Process was 33.1%.
13. At Stage 1, female applicants represented 32.2% (100) of the applicant group and male applicants represented 66.9% (208). Of these applicants, 59 (59.0%) female and 109 (52.4%) male applicants were endorsed by their forces to proceed onto Stages 2 and 3. Female representation for applicants is above that within the overall police officer population in the Police Service of England and Wales¹ including British Transport Police (BTP) overall, which is currently 25.1%. It is also above the representation within constable and sergeant ranks, which are currently 27.9% and 16.6% respectively. The one endorsed applicant from PSNI was male.
14. Out of the 55 female candidates who completed the whole process, 22 (40.0%) were successful. Male candidates had a lower success rate of 29.5% with 31 candidates successful. 3 candidates who completed the whole process did not state their sex. Out of these candidates, one (33.3%) was successful.
15. At Stage 1, there were 250 (80.4%) applicants who disclosed their ethnicity as being 'White' and 27 (8.7%) from a 'Black and Minority Ethnic' (BME) background. This is greater than the 4.8% of BME constables and

¹ Based upon Home Office Statistical Bulletin 13/09; Police Service Strength, England and Wales. Ravi Mulchandani and Jenny Signurdsson, 23 July 2009
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3.2%¹ of BME sergeants currently within the Home Office forces of England and Wales. The endorsement rates were 60.8% (152) for White applicants and 55.6% (15) for BME applicants. Of the 145 White candidates who completed Stages 2 and 3, 50 were successful in the process giving a success rate of 34.5%. Of the 15 candidates from a BME background, 3 were successful, giving a success rate of 20.0%.

16. The greatest representation of applicants at Stage 1 in terms of age fell within the '26 – 30 years' age category (105, 33.8%). At Stages 2 and 3, the '21 – 25 years' age group achieved the highest success rate of 40.0% (4) however the '26 – 30 years' group achieved a similar success rate of 39.7% (27). The lowest success rate was achieved by those over the age of 41 as there were no successful candidates in this category out of the 8 applicants who applied.
17. At Stage 1, 10 (3.2%) applicants declared that English was not their first language. Out of these applicants, 6 (60.0%) were endorsed by their force at Stage 1 and 2 (33.3%) successfully passed both Stages 2 and 3.
18. The largest group of applicants at Stage 1 were educated to 'Degree/NVQ Level 5' level (141, 45.3%). After Stages 2 and 3, this was the most successful group with 37 (43.0%) candidates being successful overall.
19. The largest group of applicants at Stage 1 were 'Married' (131, 42.1%). Out of these applicants, 77 (58.8%) were supported by their force at Stage 1. After Stages 2 and 3, the 'Married' candidates achieved a success rate of 30.7% (23).
20. Based on applicants declared sexual orientation, the majority of applicants at Stage 1 indicated that they were 'Heterosexual' (235, 75.6%). 2 (0.6%) applicants described their sexual orientation as 'Bisexual' and 15 (4.8%) applicants described their sexual orientation as 'Gay or Lesbian' at Stage 1. Of the heterosexual applicants, 143 (60.9%) were supported by their force as eligible for Stages 2 and 3. 1 (50.0%) bisexual candidate

and 10 (66.7%) gay or lesbian candidates were also endorsed by their force. The highest success rate was achieved by the bisexual candidates with 100.0% (1) successful. The heterosexual candidates had a success rate of 33.3% (46) and the gay and lesbian candidates' success rate was 22.2% (9).

21. At Stage 1, 10 (3.2%) applicants indicated that they had a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Out of these applicants, 4 (40.0%) were supported by their forces at Stage 1. Of the 3 candidates that completed the selection process, 1 candidate was successful giving a success rate of 33.3%. There was also an additional candidate who applied for reasonable adjustment and received it. However, as this candidate did not complete a biographical monitoring form, they are not included in the data as having a disability. This candidate was unsuccessful in the process.
22. The majority of applicants at Stage 1 indicated that their religion/belief was 'Christian' (151, 48.6%). Of these 151 candidates, 91 (60.3%) were endorsed by their force at Stage 1. 87 candidates who indicated their religion/belief to be 'Christian', completed Stages 2 and 3 and 32 (36.8%) were successful and were thus recommended for HPDS. Of the other successful candidates, 14 (25.9%) indicated that they did not have a religious belief/faith, 2 (3.7%) stated their religious belief/faith to be 'Other', 4 (7.4%) indicated that they preferred not to provide their religious belief/faith and 2 (3.7%) did not respond.
23. Applications for the 2009 HPDS were submitted from 41 Home Office forces, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the British Transport Police (BTP). Kent Police and Gwent Police did not have any applicants. With the exception of one Home Office force, at least one applicant was supported per force. As candidates withdrew from the process prior to taking part in Stage 3, a total of 39 Home Office forces, PSNI and BTP were represented in the last stage of the HPDS Selection Process. The largest number of applicants at Stage 1 were from the

Metropolitan Police Service (81, 26.0%) and West Midlands Police (18, 5.8%). Out of these applicants, the Metropolitan Police Service endorsed 31 (38.3%) candidates and West Midlands Police endorsed 11 (61.1%) candidates. In total, candidates from 31 different forces were successful in the process after Stages 2 and 3. The largest group of successful candidates was from the Metropolitan Police Service with 6 candidates successful, giving a success rate of 20.0%.

24. At Stage 1, a total of 6 (1.9%) student officers, 134 (43.1%) constables and 170 (54.7%) sergeants applied for HPDS in 2009. The student officers had the highest endorsement rate of 83.3% (5) and the constables and sergeants had endorsement rates of 52.2% (70) and 56.1% (96), respectively. The student officers also had the highest success rates at Stages 2 and 3 with 60.0% (3) successful. Constables and sergeants had success rates of 33.8% (23) and 31.1% (28), respectively.
25. Analysis of the marks achieved by applicants at the HPDS Stage 3 Assessment Centre shows that all the exercises had a mean score broadly close to 3.5, the mid point of the mark scale. In addition, the distribution of the marks shows that the full grade scale was used in all exercises and ability tests were approximately normally distributed. This gives an indication that the exercises differentiate well between applicants and that they are set at an appropriate level of difficulty for the particular applicant group.
26. Analysis of the relationships between the exercises shows that despite there being some small correlations between exercises (which suggests there is some overlap in what they are measuring), this is not excessive and in line with other assessment centres.
27. The inter-relationships between different competencies in the same exercise tended to be higher than relationships between the same competencies in different exercises. This is known as the exercise effect

and is a common finding in assessment centre research. The finding reinforces the importance of representing contemporary and job-related tasks, issues and priorities within the exercises and the continued use of a structured design model can support this.