

# The National Police Promotion Framework – Trial Forces Noteworthy Practices.

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## **1. Introduction.**

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide examples of implementation, from the seven existing forces engaged with the National Police Promotion Framework, which will be of interest to forces embarking on the process
- 1.2 This document is intended for use in conjunction with the Operating Manual for the National Police Promotion Framework, and looks at the ways that the 7 trial forces have implemented the National Police Promotion Framework. The document will be set out according to the four steps of the National Police Promotion Framework.
- 1.3 The seven trial forces are Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Sussex and Thames Valley. As can be seen, the forces vary in size and demography, and the National Police Promotion Framework is designed to have flexibility to allow forces to use the national model, while taking account of local need and local circumstance. All of the trial forces have contributed to this document.
- 1.3 The National Police Promotion Framework has 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 are as follows:
  - Step One: Suitability
  - Step Two: Legal examination
  - Step Three: Assessment against rank specific competencies and matching to vacancies
  - Step Four: Temporary promotion and work-based assessment
- 1.4 This document will also refer to the Licensing system for the National Police Promotion Framework, and Data capture guidance processes. These documents are available on the National Police Promotion Framework web page and can be accessed and downloaded there. Additional information around the Framework can be obtained there also.  
[www.npia.police.uk/promotions](http://www.npia.police.uk/promotions)  
Identification of further noteworthy practice is considered within the licensing system.
- 1.5 It is important to note that although the trial forces have procedures in place for the initial trial of the National Police Promotion Framework, the trial process has been ongoing and

policies and procedures have been amended and altered as a result of the experiences of forces taking part. This will be reflected in areas where new processes are in place for some areas from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. Trial forces have had to adapt or change some processes they have had in place to meet the needs of the updated Framework.

- 1.6 For the purposes of this document 'noteworthy' is defined as practice that is worthy of consideration by a force already engaged with the National Police promotion Framework or by a force about to embark on implementing the National Police Promotion Framework. It may still need tailoring to the circumstances of a particular force. The identified practice has not been validated against any particular criteria.
- 1.7 If this document raises any questions the please contact the National Police Promotion Framework Policy Contact;

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## **2. Step One: Suitability**

- 2.1 The purpose of this step is to ensure that candidates are competent in their current rank and eligible to enter the promotion process. Step One confirms that candidates have:
- completed the probation period in their current rank;
  - demonstrated competence in that rank through their Performance Development Review (PDR), or Student Officer Learning and Assessment Portfolio (SOLAP);
  - no current improvement notices in force under the unsatisfactory performance procedures;
  - no current live misconduct issues or findings;
  - adhered to the attendance management policy, taking full account of the Police Advisory Board guidance on sickness management.
- 2.2 Step One consists of a formal application by the candidate using the National Police Promotion Framework Candidate Registration Form. The line manager and Basic Command Unit/Operational Command Unit (BCU/OCU) Commander/Head of Department (or nominated delegate) must then complete the separate Line Manager Endorsement Form to state whether or not the candidate's application to the National Police Promotion Framework is supported. Once the candidate completes the Candidate Registration Form, the line manager must discuss the candidate's promotion with them.
- 2.3 Trial forces were asked to identify the process that they followed at Step One and it was clear that in the main officers were asked to express their interest in writing. All forces indicated that there were some checks to ensure that there were no outstanding disciplinary issues, or underperformance.
- 2.4 There was a difference between some forces as to how expressions of interest/applications were handled by the force. Most forces did this centrally in HR units, while the MPS did this process at a BCU/OCU level. The only other difference was that some forces were making an assessment as to suitability for promotion at this point, while others were not.
- 2.5 This area has been standardised and is now very similar for all forces since April 2009 due to the new data capture system and guidance for forces, as well as amendments to the Operating Manual. The focus at this step is on competency in the current rank prior to embarking on promotion. Forces now collate data centrally and register candidates with NPIA at Step One, which allows for better collation of data, and a uniform process between forces.

- 2.6 All persons applying at this stage, whether currently competent or not have their data forwarded to NPPIA, and the framework allows for development plans for individuals who are unsuccessful.
- 2.7 There was little evidence at this stage of forces overtly advising candidates that the National Police Promotion Framework is a competitive process and that it possible to pass or be unsuccessful at each Step. (This is a requirement of the operating manual)
- 2.7 **Candidates being Aware - Noteworthy Practice** Candidates have been Emailed and asked to express interest by email, prior to the process opening in a force. Those expressing interest by this way, are compared to those who actually apply, and the force follows up with those that chose not to apply to establish the reason. This is done to ensure that all of those interested have had the real opportunity to apply, and to be given an opportunity to go through the promotion framework.
- 2.8 **PDR - Noteworthy Practice** in trial forces was noted in the way that PDR is used to track and identify officers with career aspirations. The Metropolitan Police has an additional box within the PDR to identify this, and Hertfordshire has similar. This is used to identify potential staff putting themselves forward. This is used to manage expectations and give potential candidates realistic expectations around their promotion prospects.
- 2.8 **ACPO Support - Noteworthy Practice** was identified within the trial forces in the way that the forces in initially set up and prepared to commence the Nation Police Promotion Framework. Trial Forces identified that taking a project management approach, and ensuring clear buy in from the Senior Officers within the force were seen as vital. In addition, the use of marketing and clear communication within the force as to the change of promotion process, and its benefits, were seen as being useful in making a smooth transition. (Now a requirement of the licensing system)

### **3. Step Two: Legal Examination**

- 3.1 The purpose of this step is to ensure candidates have the appropriate legal knowledge relevant to the rank of sergeant or inspector.
- 3.2 The procedure at Step Two is the OSPRE<sup>®</sup> Part I Legal Examination. It is a national paper-based multiple-choice question examination. The syllabus is the same for all candidates everywhere. There is no change in the way that this examination is taken between candidates in either promotion process.
- 3.3 The forces adopt a very similar approach to this step. This part of the framework is administered centrally by the NPIA and the forces advise NPIA of candidates attending the examination.
- 3.4 Prior to April 2009, it was at this Step that forces registered candidates, but this now takes place at Step One. Forces outside the National Police Promotion Framework register candidates to take the examination within a timeframe designed to allow the efficient running of the examination process.
- 3.5 There was a variance between the trial forces at this Step as to the level of financial or other support given to candidates. Merseyside as an example provides no additional support to candidates, while Bedfordshire provides online access to Blackstones manuals and organises training sessions at reduced cost to the candidate within the force area. The MPS similarly provides access to online manuals. Sussex provides additional crammer courses and study leave, with candidates required to fund their own courses. Thames Valley, also add in a mock examination. Hertfordshire offer study time, and reduced price study materials.
- 3.6 The determining factor in the provision of training appeared to be the need for supervisors within that force. As numbers of supervisors have become close to the target number, then the need to provide support to officers has lessened.
- 3.7 One other issue of note is that trial forces have reported that fewer candidates are taking the OSPRE I examinations, but the percentage passing is higher. There is a suggestion that the fact that the trial forces are operating under a promotion framework, with candidates expected to progress through the process, is ensuring that the candidates taking the examination are made up of those wanting to take promotion now.

#### **4. Step Three: Assessment against Rank Competencies and Matching to Vacancies**

4.1 The purpose of this step is to:

- assess candidates' potential to perform the required competencies for the next rank;
- 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 Step Two (OSPRES<sup>®</sup> Part I Legal Examination) five year expiry period when considering their succession planning needs.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the force's senior management, in conjunction with human resources specialists, to decide on the structure and techniques to be employed in Step Three. The structure and techniques chosen must use rank-specific competencies from the ICF or its equivalent.

4.3 As can be seen, there is scope at this Step for the force to design and implement a Step Three process, which although meeting the requirements of the framework, can take account of local issues such as size of force or number of candidates. Trial forces have recognised that a Step Three process which is suitable for a low number of candidates, does not translate to hundreds of candidates per year.

4.4 The Step Three processes used by trial forces are;

##### **a) Bedfordshire Police**

- Discussion with Line Manager
- Written competency based application form
- Comments from 1st and 2nd Line manager
- Assessed by BCU/ Department Panel
- Successful candidates to HQ central panel
- Candidates boarded with presentation and competency based interview

##### **b) Hertfordshire Constabulary**

- Maintained a competent PDR at current rank
- 360 degree assessment against leadership competencies
- Linked to PDR ratings to identify those to attend assessment
- All candidates ranked
- Candidates at top of ranking list interviewed
- Purpose of interview is to assess operational competence.

### **c) Leicestershire Constabulary**

- Officer request promotion application form based on ICF competencies
- Successful officers invited to interview
- Interview consists of 3 panel members (the chairs of these panels will be at the rank of Superintendent, wing members are at the rank of Ch Insp)
- Interview score moderation takes place
- Officers are placed into banding and placed in a promotion pool
- Officers in the top band are promoted temporarily for 12 months subject to suitable force vacancies
- Officers in other bands can be promoted due to skill set and if the top band is exhausted.

### **d) Merseyside Police**

- Candidate discusses application with 1st and 2nd line manager
- PDR to be complete
- Candidate completes written competency based application form
- Form critically assessed and scored by 1st line manager
- Form critically assessed and scored by 2nd line manager
- Form scrutinised by quality assurance panel
- Successful candidates to this point undertake structured interview
- Post assessment panel makes decision on candidates promotion

### **e) Metropolitan Police**

- Candidate completes written competency based application form
- Application form assessed/checked by line manager
- Application form assessed and scored locally by SMT panel
- Successful Application forwarded to central panel for quality assurance
- Candidates advised of success or not.

### **f) Sussex Police**

- Written application providing evidence against ICF competencies
- Application needs to be supported by PDR and recommendation by line manager, second line manager and Superintendent .
- Attendance and misconduct details also required.
- Paper sift and successful candidates invited to interview (scoring system used 1-5 )
- Competency based interview

- QA Panel
- Successful candidates into pool.

#### **g) Thames Valley Police**

- Register interest in process
  - Candidate completes application pack based on ICF.
  - Last 2 PDR's attached and submitted
  - Applications assessed and short listed
  - Short listed candidates undertake competency based interview
  - Feedback for all candidates
- 4.5 There are clear similarities between how the trial forces approach this Step, and all of the approaches are within the requirements of the framework. Only the MPS has an entirely paper based process, without any form of interview, and this is an example of where the process has varied according to local need. All forces have links between this Step and the Integrated Competency Framework.
- 4.6 **Involvement of support associations - Noteworthy Practice** All the trial forces involve the Police federation of England and Wales in the selection process at Step Three. Many include other staff associations such as the Black Police Association or Samurai (mixed faith group within the MPS). The level of the involvement does vary, from being involved in the design of the process, to tangible involvement in the decision making or quality assuring the Step Three process.
- 4.7 **Links to PDR – Noteworthy Practice** Some trial forces link this selection process very closely to PDR such as Thames Valley and Hertfordshire. This has had the effect of raising the profile and standard of PDR within that force, not only within the area of promotions, but on a wider level across the force. (a requirement of the operating manual and licensing system)

## 5. Step Four: Temporary Promotion and Work-Based Assessment

5.1 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 National Occupational Standards with a view to their achieving substantive promotion at the end of the 12 month assessment period.

5.2 Step Four is a mandatory 12 month period of temporary promotion, during which candidates are assessed in the workplace against selected National Occupational Standards for the new rank and the ICF or equivalent. Successful completion of work-based assessment should lead to substantive promotion after 12 months. In extenuating circumstances, temporary promotion can be extended for another 12 months maximum.

5.3 **Setting up your Assessment Protocol - Noteworthy Practice** In discussion with the trial forces it was strongly recommended that a project management approach is taken to deciding on the approach to be taken at this Step. Account should be taken of existing assessment capacity and approaches. It was suggested by the trial forces that it is noteworthy practice to make use of a professional in the field of assessment to do this, as it requires specialised skills and knowledge to do so effectively, particularly around discussions and negotiations with an awarding body. Forces should negotiate with awarding bodies, recognising that there is a competitive market and gaining best value. Working closely from the outset with an awarding body will help to reduce bureaucracy and achieve best practice easier.

5.4 The system that forces have decided to set up their assessment in force again takes account of local circumstance and numbers. The system is of course subject to discussion and agreement with the awarding body. The methods can roughly be divided into three styles;

1. Central team
2. Line Manager
3. Hybrid of both

5.5 **Central Team:** The Metropolitan Police has this method, and Sussex Police are moving towards it. There is a central team of assessors who have a number of candidates each and travel to assess them. The assessment of candidates is the full time job

of the assessors. The Metropolitan Police now has a mixture of police officer and police staff assessors.

- 5.6 **Line Managers:** Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire strive to have the line manager of the candidate assess them in the workplace for Step 4. In some cases this is not possible, and then they will have an assessor who has the best knowledge and experience to meet the needs of the candidate. In Hertfordshire assessment is sometimes carried out by a competent peer.
- 5.7 **Hybrid:** Used by Leicestershire, Thames Valley and Merseyside. Leicestershire will often have the same assessor looking after an individual, but can split the units according to the needs of the candidate. Thames Valley and Merseyside have a small team of skilled full time assessors who assess the managerial National Occupational Standards, which are more generic. The standards which are more operational are assessed by A1 qualified line managers or other operational officers if the line manager cannot fulfil this function.
- 5.8 The trial forces all assess their candidates according to the requirements of the codes of practice for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This allows for a wide variety of assessment methods, which are externally verified by the awarding body with which a candidate is registered. Some trial forces are keen on observation as the preferred method of assessment, while others prefer a wider variety of assessment methods including, product, personal accounts and witness testimony and professional discussion.
- 5.9 **Portfolios - Noteworthy Practice** The experience of the trial forces is that your assessment strategy and the methods you use can have an effect on the size of the candidate portfolio. Early discussions with the awarding body, as well as clear and repeated instructions to candidates, and the effective use of signposting and cross referencing can all have an effect on the amount of paperwork produced.
- 5.10 **Portfolios – Noteworthy Practice** The trial forces have noted that some assessment methods reduce the burden on the candidate and also reduce the amount of product provided in the portfolio. The use of Observation and professional discussion have been identified by some trial forces as being key to keeping the portfolio small while still ensuring effective assessment.
- 5.11 **Portfolios – Noteworthy Practice** Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire both use an electronic portfolio for candidates. Sussex is actively looking to identify one for their force as well. The advantages that these forces identify are reduced paper

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work, and a system where milestones and internal and external verification are easy. There is an advantage to candidates and assessors with remote access.

## 6. Other areas of Interest

- 6.1 Trial forces were asked to identify the positive benefits to them that involvement in the National Police Promotion Framework has seen. They identified the following;
- Standard of PDRs increased
  - Standard of briefings increased
  - Provides additional support to newly promoted officers
  - Regular meetings between line manager/assessor and candidate
  - Provides additional training/knowledge to newly promoted officers
  - Fairness of the process
  - Increased involvement in development of candidates
  - Robust structure for promotion
  - Focussed development for candidates
  - Reduction in acting ranks
  - Standardised of operational practice
  - Force has control of process
  - Increased numbers of supervisors quickly
  - Better performance management for candidates
- 6.2 The issue of bureaucracy was discussed. The overwhelming view of the trial forces is that there is no need for the National Police Promotion Framework to be bureaucratic and they would assert that the processes that they have in place ensure that they have a streamlined process.
- 6.3 **Methodology – Noteworthy Practice** Trial forces were asked what advice that they would give to a new force to ensure that the forces developed their framework in an efficient way, and taking account of the requirements of the National Police Promotion Framework. Suggestions made included:
- Chief Officer buy in for the start
  - Use Project management approach
  - Ensure robust and effective workforce planning processes.
  - Ensure buy in from staff support associations at an early stage
  - Use current up to date assessment strategy
  - Simple evidence recording mechanisms
  - Use sign posting and cross referencing
  - Effective use of Holistic assessment across the 6 NOS
  - Effective process for recording of assessment decisions with audit trail
  - Skilled and experienced assessors will add value
  - Match your Step Four process to the codes of practice
  - Ensure you have robust quality assurance and standardisation at Step 4

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- Project planning approach
- Consider electronic assessment system for Step four
- Regular training and standardising for assessors

## **7. Points of Contact in Trial Forces**

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