

Specials Recruit Assessment Process

Information for candidates

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The information included within this document will explain how we choose suitable candidates for the Special Constabulary.

The assessment will take about three hours. We are not able to provide meals at the assessment process, however, you may want to bring a snack, as you will get a short break.

Please bring the following documents with you to the assessment process to confirm your identity.

- A full 10-year passport or **two** of the following.
 - British driving licence
 - P45
 - Birth certificate (issued within six weeks of your birth)
 - Chequebook and bank card (with three statements and proof of your signature)
 - Credit card which has your photo on it
 - Proof of where you live (for example, a Council Tax bill, gas bill, electricity bill, water bill or phone bill)

If you do not bring the documents as listed above you will not be able to take part in the assessment process.

At the assessment process you will take part in a series of exercises. This document has been produced to help you prepare for the assessment process. We advise you to take time to study this document before you come to the assessment process.

What is an assessment process?

An assessment process is a process where we look at how you perform in a variety of exercises.

We assess your performance against competencies which are relevant to the role of a Special Constable.

We include the following processes in the assessment process.

- We assess **what** you do and **how** you do it.
- Trained assessors measure how you perform in exercises which relate to specific competencies.
- We use information from all of the exercises to produce your final results.

Which competencies will you assess at the assessment process?

We assess competencies which are particularly relevant to the role of a Special Constable. The Home Office working group have set out detailed descriptions of each of these competencies, which are shown in Appendix A of this booklet.

How many exercises will I have to take part in?

You will take part in:

- a competency-based structured interview, which is made up of four questions;
- one written exercise; and
- a situational judgement test.

All candidates will do the same exercises and we will assess them equally.

What will you ask me to do at the assessment process?

In the interview we will ask you four questions about how you have dealt with certain situations in your past.

In the situational judgement test we will ask you to answer multiple-choice questions which will measure your ability to use your judgement when you are presented with different situations. The situations will all be based around real life examples which a Special Constable may potentially deal with.

We will give you all the information you need to deal with the situations. No prior knowledge of policing procedure, policy or law is needed for this test.

In the written exercise, you will be asked to consider a policing problem in order to allow you to demonstrate the skills required to be a special constable. This problem will be set in Sandford Town. Sandford Town is a fictional place created for the assessment process only.

You do not need to memorise anything, as we will provide you with all the information you need in the preparation phases of this exercise. No prior knowledge of policing procedure, policy or law is needed for this test.

For the written exercise and situational judgement test we will give you all the information you need to deal with the situations and you should not introduce any extra information.

What will happen during the interview?

The interview will last for up to 20 minutes and we will ask you four questions about how you have dealt with specific situations in the past. These questions will be related to some of the competency areas found in Appendix A. We will give you up to five minutes to answer each question. The person interviewing you will stop you if you go over the five minutes. As the person interviewing you asks you the question, they will also give you a copy of the question to refer to. They may ask you further questions to help you to give a full response. When you consider your responses to the interview questions, please only choose examples that you feel comfortable discussing with the person interviewing you.

The interviewer will assess your responses against the behaviours you need for the role. So that you can do your best please make sure you are familiar with the competencies described in Appendix A and that your answer provides you with an opportunity to explain how you have shown these behaviours.

What will happen during the written exercise?

The written exercise will last for 20 minutes. We will show you into the exercise room and give you a thorough briefing before you start the exercise. We will provide paper and pens, together with a 'proposal document' template to write your response. A copy of the proposal document template has been provided in Appendix B at the back of this document. You may make rough notes on a

separate piece of paper, which we will not assess. We will tell you when you have five minutes left and again when you have one minute left. We will assess the written exercise after you have finished the whole assessment process.

What will happen during the situational judgement test?

The situational judgement test will last for 75 minutes. You will take the test in an exercise room and you will receive a thorough briefing before you start the test. During this assessment you will be presented with 50 questions. Each question describes a situation and provides you with a choice of four response options. You will be asked to use your judgement to pick the most effective (best) and/or least effective (worst) of the response options. Once you have made your decision you will then fill in the appropriate spaces on an answer sheet we provide. We will give you full instructions before you start the test. We will assess the situational judgement test after you have finished the whole assessment process. An example situational judgement test question has been provided at the back of this document in Appendix C.

How do you assess me during the interview, situational judgement test and written exercise?

We have designed the assessment process to make sure that we assess each of the seven competencies relevant to the role of a Special Constable at least twice, except for 'Respect for Race and Diversity', which will be assessed in every exercise. You should not be concerned if you feel that you have not done well in any one particular exercise as you will have at least one other exercise where we will assess the same competencies again.

We will award your performance a grade on a scale from A to D, in each competency area within the exercises. We give As to the highest performing candidates and Ds to the candidates who do not perform so well. We award grades in relation to **what** you did and **how** you did it.

You do not need to know about the law or procedures relating to police work.

Who are the assessors and interviewers?

The assessors and interviewers are either police officers, special officers, police staff or people who have been specifically chosen from the community. All the assessors and interviewers are highly trained and they are continually monitored throughout the assessment process.

What information do the assessors and interviewers have about me?

The assessors and interviewers will only know your candidate number, which we will give you when you arrive. They will have no other information about you.

Will there be a timetable to follow?

The assessment process will follow a timetable. You must arrive by the time we have set. If you arrive late you may not be able to take part in the assessment process at that time.

Other people may take the assessment at the same time as you. However, they may take the exercises in a different order. For example, one group may take the interviews first while another group may start with the written exercise. We will tell you in the briefing we give you on the day, which order you will carry out the exercises.

What will happen in the preliminary briefing?

When you arrive you will fill in a registration form and we will check your identification documents. We will give you an outline of the assessment process followed by a full briefing before each stage of the assessment. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and sort out any concerns you may have about the assessment process.

How can I prepare for the interview, situational judgement test and written exercise?

You can practice and improve your skills in relation to the competencies we assess. It may be useful for you to carefully consider your ability in relation to each of the seven competencies. You could carry out a detailed and honest self-assessment and think of anything you could improve. You may also want to discuss your own situation in relation to the seven competencies with your colleagues, friends or family.

We advise you to approach any assessment process with an open mind, be yourself and behave as naturally as the circumstances allow.

What information can you give me about the interviews?

We will assess you on five different competencies during the 20-minute interview. These are:

- Personal Responsibility;
- Resilience;
- Teamworking;
- Respect for Race and Diversity; and
- Oral Communication.

We recognise that some people find the term 'Diversity' confusing. Diversity is about the wide variety of differences between people that make up our society. These differences can be of any nature. To help you prepare for the Respect for Race and Diversity part of the interview please read the behaviours that make up this area. You can find these in Appendix A. Consider an example or examples of when you have dealt with others who are different from you in some way. This may be because of their race, religion, position in society, background, circumstances or appearance. In your response for this question, you may provide an example that reflects any diversity issues you have experienced in the past.

What information can you give me about the situational judgement test?

The situational judgement test will last for 75 minutes and there are 50 questions in the test. Situations are based in a policing setting however no previous experience or knowledge on policing will be required. All the information you will need to pick a response to the situations will be presented to you in the questions.

What information can you give me about the written exercise?

In the written exercise you will have to write a proposal document about an issue within Sandford Town (a fictional medium sized town). You will not need any prior information or knowledge about policing or further details about Sandford town. All the information you will need to provide an answer will be provided in the candidate preparation material which will be given to you at the assessment process.

How will you give me my results?

You will receive a 'candidate feedback' report providing detailed information on how you performed in the assessment process. The aim of the report is to show how you performed in each of the competency areas and exercises. Your force will give you your candidate feedback report. Please **do not** contact NPIA Examinations & Assessment directly to ask about the release dates for results and candidate feedback reports.

How do I give feedback about the assessment process?

As part of the ongoing improvement of the Specials Recruit Assessment Process, we would like your views and experiences of the process and you can give us feedback online by filling in a candidate feedback questionnaire. We will give you the website after your assessment. We will not count any feedback you give us as a formal appeal.

What is the appeals procedure?

The appeals procedure is a document that gives you guidance on what to do if you have any concerns about your assessment. The appeals procedure is in Appendix D at the back of this booklet. Please make sure you read this before your assessment.

We hope this information is helpful, and we would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success at the assessment process.

Appendix A

Competencies relevant to the role of Special Constable

1. Community and customer focus

Focuses on the customer and provides a high-quality service that is tailored to meet their individual needs. Understands the communities that are served and shows an active commitment to policing that reflects their needs and concerns.

Level C: Provides a high level of service to customers. Maintains contact with customers, works out what they need and responds to them.

- Presents an appropriate image to the public and other organisations.
- Supports strategies that aim to build an organisation that reflects the community it serves.
- Focuses on the customer in all activities.
- Tries to sort out customers' problems as quickly as possible.
- Apologises for mistakes and sorts them out as quickly as possible.
- Responds quickly to customer requests.
- Makes sure that customers are satisfied with the service they receive.
- Manages customer expectations.
- Keeps customers updated on progress.
- Balances customer needs with organisational needs.

Negative Indicators

- Is not customer-focused and does not consider individual needs.
- Does not tell customers what is going on.
- Presents an unprofessional image to customers.
- Only sees a situation from their own view, not from the customer's view.
- Shows little interest in the customer – only deals with their immediate problem.
- Does not respond to the needs of the local community.
- Focuses on organisational issues rather than customer needs.
- Does not make the most of opportunities to talk to people in the community.
- Slow to respond to customers' requests.
- Fails to check that customers' needs have been met.

2. Effective Communication

Communicates ideas and information effectively, both verbally and in writing. Uses language and a style of communication that is appropriate to the situation and people being addressed. Makes sure that others understand what is going on.

Level C: Speaks clearly and concisely, and does not use jargon. Uses plain English and correct grammar. Listens carefully to understand.

- Makes sure all written and spoken communication is concise and well structured.
- Communicates information in a friendly and approachable style.
- Uses appropriate language and does not use jargon.
- Makes sure communication has a clear purpose.
- Makes sure communication is factual and accurate, and provided at the right time.
- Communicates information in an interesting way.
- Pays attention and shows interest in what others are saying.
- Uses correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Listens carefully to understand.
- Asks questions to clarify issues.

Negative Indicators

- Is hesitant, nervous and uncertain when speaking.
- Speaks without first thinking through what to say.
- Uses inappropriate language or jargon.
- Speaks in a rambling way.
- Does not consider the target audience.
- Avoids answering difficult questions.
- Does not give full information without being questioned.
- Writes in an unstructured way.
- Uses poor spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Assumes others understand what has been said without actually checking.
- Does not listen, and interrupts at inappropriate times.

3. Personal Responsibility

Takes personal responsibility for making things happen and achieving results. Displays motivation, commitment, perseverance and conscientiousness. Acts with a high degree of integrity.

Level B: Takes personal responsibility for own actions and for sorting out issues or problems that arise. Is focused on achieving results to required standards and developing skills and knowledge.

- Takes personal responsibility for own actions.
- Takes on tasks without having to be asked.
- Uses initiative.
- Takes action to resolve problems and fulfil own responsibilities.
- Keeps promises and does not let colleagues down.
- Takes pride in own work.
- Is conscientious in completing work on time.
- Follows things through to a satisfactory conclusion.
- Shows enthusiasm about own role.
- Focuses on a task even if it is routine.
- Improves own job-related knowledge and keeps it up to date.
- Is open, honest and genuine, standing up for what is right.

Negative Indicators

- Passes responsibility upwards inappropriately.
- Is not concerned about letting others down.
- Will not deal with issues, just hopes that they will go away.
- Blames others rather than admitting to mistakes or looking for help.
- Is unwilling to take on responsibility.
- Puts in the minimum effort that is needed to get by.
- Shows a negative and disruptive attitude.
- Shows little energy or enthusiasm for work.
- Expresses a cynical attitude to the organisation and their job.
- Gives up easily when faced with problems.
- Fails to recognise personal weaknesses and development needs.
- Makes little or no attempt to develop self or keep up to date.

4. Resilience

Shows resilience, even in difficult circumstances. Prepared to make difficult decisions and has the confidence to see them through.

Level B: Shows confidence to perform own role without unnecessary support in normal circumstances. Acts in an appropriate way and controls emotions.

- Deals confidently with members of the public, drawing on own skills and experience.
- Is comfortable working alone with an appropriate level of supervision and guidance.
- Puts a positive view on situations and concentrates on what can be achieved.
- Is aware of and manages personal stress.
- Accepts criticism and praise.
- Controls emotions and does not get emotionally involved in disputes.
- Is patient when dealing with people who make complaints.
- Acts in a confident way when challenged.
- Says 'no' when necessary.
- Takes a rational and consistent approach to work.

Negative Indicators

- Gets easily upset, frustrated and annoyed.
- Panics and becomes agitated when problems arise.
- Walks away from confrontation when it would be more appropriate to get involved.
- Needs constant reassurance, support and supervision.
- Uses inappropriate physical force.
- Gets too emotionally involved in situations.
- Reacts inappropriately when faced with rude or abusive people.
- Deals with situations aggressively.
- Complains and whinges about problems rather than dealing with them.
- Gives in inappropriately when under pressure.
- Worries about making mistakes and avoids difficult situations wherever possible.

5. Respect for race and diversity

Considers and shows respect for the opinions, circumstances and feelings of colleagues and members of the public, no matter what their race, religion, position, background, circumstances, status or appearance.

Level A: Understands other people's views and takes them into account. Is tactful and diplomatic when dealing with people, treating them with dignity and respect at all times. Understands and is sensitive to social, cultural and racial differences.

- Sees issues from other people's viewpoints.
- Is polite, tolerant and patient when dealing with people, treating them with respect and dignity.
- Respects the needs of everyone involved when sorting out disagreements.
- Shows genuine concern and sensitivity to people's problems, vulnerabilities and needs.
- Deals with diversity issues and gives positive practical support to staff who may feel vulnerable.
- Makes people feel valued by listening to and supporting their needs and interests.
- Uses language in an appropriate way and is sensitive to the way it may affect people.
- Identifies and respects other people's values within the law.
- Acknowledges and respects a broad range of social and cultural customs and beliefs.
- Understands what offends others and adapts own actions accordingly.
- Respects confidentiality, wherever appropriate.
- Delivers difficult messages sensitively.
- Challenges attitudes and behaviour which are abusive, aggressive and discriminatory.

Negative Indicators

- Does not consider other people's feelings.
- Does not encourage people to talk about personal issues.
- Criticises people without considering their feelings and motivation.
- Makes situations worse with inappropriate remarks, language or behaviour.
- Is thoughtless and tactless when dealing with people.
- Is dismissive and impatient with people.
- Does not respect confidentiality.
- Unnecessarily emphasises power and control in situations where this is not appropriate.
- Intimidates others in an aggressive and overpowering way.
- Uses humour inappropriately.
- Shows bias and prejudice when dealing with people.

6. Teamworking

Develops strong working relationships inside and outside the team to achieve common goals. Breaks down barriers between groups and involves others in discussions and decisions.

Level C: Works effectively as a team member and helps build relationships within it. Actively helps and supports others to achieve team goals.

- Understands own role in a team.
- Actively takes part in team tasks in the workplace.
- Is open and approachable.
- Makes time to get to know people.
- Co-operates with and supports others.
- Offers to help other people.
- Asks for and accepts help when needed.
- Develops mutual trust and confidence in others.
- Willingly takes on unpopular or routine tasks.
- Contributes to team objectives no matter what the direct personal benefit may be.
- Acknowledges that there is often a need to be a member of more than one team.

Negative Indicators

- Does not volunteer to help other team members.
- Is only interested in taking part in high-profile and interesting activities.
- Takes credit for successes without recognising the contribution of others.
- Works to own agenda rather than contributing to team performance.
- Allows small exclusive groups of people to develop.
- Plays one person off against another.
- Restricts and controls what information is shared.
- Does not let people say what they think.
- Does not offer advice or get advice from others.
- Shows little interest in working jointly with other groups to meet the goals of everyone involved.
- Does not discourage conflict within the organisation.

7. Planning and Organising

Plans, organises and supervises activities to make sure resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve organisational goals.

Level C: Plans and carries out activities in an orderly and well-structured way. Prioritises tasks, uses time in the best possible way, and works within appropriate policy and procedures.

- Decides priorities and organises workload.
- Differentiates between what is urgent and what is important.
- Develops appropriate ways to achieve goals
- Achieves demanding deadlines through careful planning.
- Ensures compliance with policy, procedure and legislation.
- Maintains orderly, accurate and up-to-date paperwork.
- Creates systems that make information easily accessible.
- Always knows where to find things.
- Does not lose sight of goals.
- Is punctual and reliable.

Negative Indicators

- Takes an unsystematic approach to tasks.
- Deals with tasks as they arrive, without considering priorities.
- Waits until problems arise.
- Does not differentiate between the levels of importance of tasks.
- Does not check for or spot mistakes and inconsistencies.
- Leaves roles and responsibilities unclear.
- Consistently fails to meet deadlines due to poor planning.
- Tries to achieve everything personally.
- Takes inappropriate short cuts.
- Takes a fixed approach – does not monitor and re-assess plans.
- Does not consider costs when planning activities.
- Cannot work on a number of priorities at the same time.

Appendix C

Practice Questions – Situational Judgement Test

Situational Judgement Test

A main road has been closed because of a serious road traffic collision. Access to the road is only available for the emergency services. A diversion has been put in place, and your supervisor has asked you to stand at one of the road closure starting points to make sure that no one gets through. The accident is blocking one side of the road but both sides of the road are closed to allow access to emergency vehicles. A line of traffic is filing past you; one driver winds down his window and says he is very late for an important meeting, and needs to get through.

Please pick the **best option** (most effective option) and the **worst option** (least effective option) in terms of what you should do.

- A** Don't enter into a conversation with the man and wave him on to continue towards the diversion because you don't want to cause further traffic delays.
- B** Apologise for the inconvenience, explaining that there has been a road traffic incident and no one can pass.
- C** Say to the man that he should not have stopped and continue to direct the rest of the traffic.
- D** Ask the man to pull over and then radio your supervisor to see if he'll allow the man through on this occasion.

The best option is: B
The worst option is: D

Appendix D

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Appeals information for candidates

The following document outlines the process that you need to follow when raising concerns about your attendance at a Specials Recruit Assessment Process.

If you have a concern about an issue that occurs at a Specials Recruit Assessment Process you should raise it with a member of the Assessment Process Delivery Team on the day in the first instance. If these are not resolved and you still wish to report any extenuating circumstances or procedural concerns that you believe may have adversely affected your performance, you must do so in the form of a written appeal. It is your responsibility to provide supporting evidence at the time of writing.

You must submit the appeal to the force recruiting department within seven days of your attendance at the assessment process. Reports received after this date will not be considered.

Please note that views expressed through the candidate feedback questionnaire will **NOT** constitute a formal appeal. You should not expect a response to issues raised through this channel.

If you have met the required standard in the assessment process your appeal will not be considered further. Only if you have not met the national standard will your appeal be considered. Procedural issues, however, will still be investigated as they may have important implications for the assessment process as a whole.

Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are likely to be a serious event or series of events, such as illness, accident or injury, or the death or serious illness of a family member. Lack of preparation and/or a heavy workload prior to attendance at the assessment process are not considered to be extenuating circumstances.

If you are aware of any extenuating circumstances prior to, or on the day of the assessment process, you should report any problems, which may affect your performance, to a member of the Assessment Process Delivery Team before your assessment commences as there will not be grounds for appeal after the assessment process. You will be given the opportunity to raise any issues prior to the start of your assessment. It will be your decision as to whether you continue with the assessment or withdraw and attend at a later date.

If you withdraw before the assessment commences you will be given the opportunity to attend the next available assessment process. You will not need to re-apply, or wait the six month period that is applicable if you withdraw once the assessment process has commenced, i.e. if you have been exposed to the assessment exercise material. Once you have decided to commence, extenuating circumstances will not be grounds for appeal. A member of the Assessment Process Delivery Team will explain this in the initial briefing.

Marking appeals

Candidates wishing to query their results or the marking of the assessment process should contact the force recruitment representative who will respond appropriately. Please **DO NOT** contact NPIA Examinations & Assessment directly with enquiries about any marking appeals.

Procedural concerns

Procedural concerns will be investigated in the first instance by the organisation responsible for managing the assessment process. If unresolved, the appeal will be passed to an Appeals Board.

Force recruitment representatives will respond directly to you to acknowledge receipt of the appeal. If the appeal has not been resolved within six weeks from the receipt of your appeal, the force representative will write to you to explain that your appeal is still being considered.

Successful appeals will not result in a fail result being changed into a pass. However, if upheld you will be permitted, where possible, to attend another assessment process when the exercises are changed or six months after your original assessment process, whichever is sooner, without re-application.

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