Review of police initial recruitment

Final report with recommendations

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Executive summary

The College of Policing undertook a review of police initial recruitment between September 2015 and June 2016. This was in response to concerns from the police service that current police recruitment may not be designed for the current and future recruitment needs of police forces.

These concerns were driven by changes in local recruitment needs (including the need to recruit for more diverse workforces), by strategic developments in police professionalisation (including implementing the College’s Leadership Review) and by an observation that the current national assessment centre required subsequent in-force assessment of candidates.

As the majority of policing’s expenditure is on people, making the right selection choice is essential to the success of the police service and wellbeing of its staff. Therefore it is essential that an effective recruitment model is put in place to support the police service’s needs.

Summary of review findings

While the College of Policing is currently responsible for designing and delivering the Police SEARCH® Recruit Assessment Centre (RAC), it was decided that the review be widened to include an evaluation of evidence across the whole recruitment model. Some recommendations outlined in this report extend further than the College’s current remit.

Methodology

The recommendations of this review are based on the findings of a rapid evidence assessment (REA), which evaluated over 8,000 journal articles. The REA uncovered strong evidence (eg, groups of studies claiming similar findings through meta-analytical reviews) for certain aspects of this review (eg, selection procedures that best predict on-the-job performance). It also identified best available evidence for other aspects of this review where the evidence base was less robust (eg, strategies that lead to attracting diverse and talented applicants).

Where the evidence was stronger, we have made proposals. Where the evidence base is less certain, we have put forward recommendations for research in a policing context. Further details regarding the REA methodology are outlined in appendix 2.

Throughout the review, we have sought views from forces, the Workforce Coordination Committee, the Police Federation, Higher Education Forum, and the Home Office. The College consulted chief officers, staff associations and the Home Office on an interim report. We asked key stakeholders to comment on the seven recommendations outlined through the interim report. The majority of policing organisations positively supported the seven recommendations outlined in the interim report. We amended this final report based on the comments raised in the consultation phase.
Findings and recommendations
The intended outcomes of the review are to develop a recruitment model that:

- is valid, reliable and fair
- generates sufficient quality of applicants who meet national standards
- minimises adverse impact against underrepresented applicants
- applies the latest innovation in recruitment technology.

The findings are set out into five main areas in this summary:

- attraction and marketing
- effective selection
- maximising assessment outcomes
- technology and innovations that support recruitment
- evaluation.

Recommendations in the same areas are illustrated in the figure overleaf.

Attraction and marketing
The findings of the review make it clear that, in order to implement an effective attraction strategy, organisations need to focus on attracting quantity and quality of applicants. There is a strong link between effective processes to attract quality applicants and identifying sufficient quality candidates to appoint in role. It is particularly important to implement effective attraction and sifting processes if an organisation wants to attract high-quality applicants from underrepresented groups.

While the evidence base did not reveal a tried and tested model of attraction suitable for the police service, it did uncover a number of promising interventions to help support attracting talented and underrepresented applicants. The review puts forward a recommendation to establish an evidence base for police attraction and marketing in order to identify interventions proven to attract sufficient quantity, quality and diversity of applicants. The College is seeking support from the police service to test and evaluate the effectiveness of attraction initiatives.

Effective selection
The strongest evidence base of the review was proven selection procedures that are predictive of on-the-job performance. The review highlights the challenge of implementing selection procedures that are highly predictive of job success as these same selection procedures are known to generate the greatest subgroup difference for members of underrepresented groups. The review highlights that great care is needed in designing a recruitment process that is sufficiently valid while avoiding adverse impact for underrepresented groups.

For sifting, organisations should trial situational judgment testing and personality testing. While the review acknowledges concerns over the ability of personality testing to predict work performance, it also recognises that personality testing may be useful to screen out undesirable characteristics linked to an applicant’s personal integrity. Similar sifting models have proven useful in the United States.

These sifting tools will need to be evaluated before the College will be in a position to offer guidance on their effectiveness. This may help forces make decisions about what tools to select when planning recruitment processes. There are no proposals for the College to make sifting tools a compulsory part of the police initial recruitment process.

The review recommends that the College of Policing works in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to develop the specifications for a new recruit assessment process. This process should be designed based on the best available evidence on improving selection decisions and minimising adverse impact against underrepresented groups.
Summary of recommendations

Technology and innovation

Consideration of e-recruitment platform to incorporate application, sitting, assessment, applicant tracking
Consider national brand, advertising and marketing campaign (Recommendation 6)

Maximising assessment outcomes

Improve candidate reactions and perceptions by design:
- Reinforcing job-relevance of measures in candidate communications and contact
- Emphasise validity of selection measures
- Provide open and transparent information about processes

Proposed selection process

Situational judgement Tests in sitting
Source evidence on validity and adverse impact

Consider use of personality to predict integrity in sitting
Conduct trial to inform future methodology

Attraction and marketing

Establish an evidence base for police attraction and marketing

Reduce candidate anxiety by:
- Providing information
- Warm and friendly environment
- Test use of self-affirmations to reduce stereotype threat
- Greater use of assessors from minority groups (Recommendation 5)

Assessment Centre incorporating:
- Current and relevant work sample tests
- Job-relevant cognitive ability tests
- Multiple mini interviews measure of job
- Knowledge/ cultural fit/values (Recommendation 1)

Conduct trials where possible in existing SEARCH processes

Evaluation

Evaluation strategy to review contributions of attraction, selection, and efforts to maximise assessment outcomes. (Recommendation 7)

Considerations:
- Time commitment for candidates
- Acceptable cost/candidate
- Avoidance of adverse impact
- High predictive validity
- Quality assurance and industry standards

Modular assessment for PCs, PCSOs and Specials (Recommendation 2) and options for additional requirements to meet local needs (Recommendation 3)

National minimum competence standards for each role
The new process is being developed in partnership with the College and will be piloted by the MPS and selected other pilot forces in 2017. While further work is required in developing the new recruit assessment process, at this stage it is proposed, based on the evidence base, that the assessment process incorporates current and relevant work sample tests, job-relevant cognitive ability tests, multiple mini interviews (MMIs) and measures job knowledge, cultural fit and values.

The pilot should be used as an opportunity to trial a more modern and technologically advanced process which uses video presentation and virtual reality where appropriate. An element of technological sophistication may reflect well on the police service as a modern employer of choice and help attract quality candidates.

As mentioned, the new process will be piloted across a diverse group of candidates in a number of forces. No changes will be made to the national recruitment assessment centre before there is clear evidence that those changes will result in assessment that is fit for purpose (eg, predicts success in the role, receives positive candidate reaction, minimises adverse impact).

Maximising assessment outcomes

This area of the review uncovered promising interventions that are likely to provide applicants with an opportunity to perform to their best ability. The evidence base indicates that reactions and perceptions could be enhanced by reinforcing the job relevance of measures in communications and contact with applicants. This could also be achieved by emphasising the validity of selection measures and providing open and transparent information about processes.

Evidence-based interventions should be put in place aimed at improving applicant experience and subsequent enhancements in applicant performance. These interventions should be evaluated for their effectiveness before being introduced into recruit assessment processes.

Innovation and technology

The findings of the review have identified an emerging evidence base around innovation and technology that supports recruitment. The most promising innovations are around systems designed to attract and manage applicants and e-recruitment platforms that support sifting and assessing applicants.

While the College of Policing does not currently have a remit to manage a national e-recruitment platform, 60% of review respondents felt that the College is the best place for a national e-recruitment platform. Respondents felt that the College is a credible and neutral non-commercial organisation.

Benefits of a national strategy for recruitment technology include:

- opportunities for greater efficiencies, including nationally tracking applicants
- managing transfers
- managing assessment centre candidates
- monitoring trends
- evaluating new recruitment initiatives
- improving consistency across forces regarding standards for applying, sifting, and branding
- improving candidate experience
- reducing cost due to economies of scale.

Consideration should be given to developing a national police e-recruitment platform. This could include using different assessment methods (eg, during sifting, pre-assessment centre and during assessment centre), accepting and tracking applicants, and linking to central marketing websites for national marketing and attraction campaigns – which is linked to Recommendation 3 of the Leadership Review (advertise all vacancies for recruitment and promotion nationally).
To support this recommendation, both financial investment and IT support would be required in order to gain greater consistency and efficiencies. Currently the College is seeking funding via the police transformational fund.

**Evaluation strategy**
This report has emphasised the importance of developing interventions based on the best available evidence. As part of an evidence-based practice approach, interventions should be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis.

We recommend conducting evaluations of changes in process and procedure that arise from the recommendations in this report. Evaluations should consider the impact of initiatives across a number of criteria, including:

- the impact of an initiative on candidate/applicant performance
- an analysis of the validity, reliability and fairness of an initiative
- evaluation of the equality impact of an initiative
- the cost-benefits of an initiative.

Further information outlining the evaluation strategy can be found in appendix 4.

No permanent changes will be made to selection procedures or recruitment processes before there is clear evidence that those changes will result in assessment that is effective and fit for purpose.
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- The members of the review of police initial recruitment working group\(^1\) for supporting the review and for providing valuable insights into current and desired recruitment practice.
- Chief Constables and leaders of staff associations who provided access to their teams for consultation (including workshop participation, responding to an interim report).
- The four independent peer reviewers for their advice and comments on the draft final review report and considerations for how the review should be progressed.
- All the members of the College of Policing Selection and Assessment team who were involved in the rapid evidence assessment element of the review.
- College of Policing researchers who provided advice and guidance throughout the review, which helped to ensure appropriate research techniques were applied for evidence gathering and reporting.
- To the College of Policing Curriculum, Assessment and Accreditation lead and Head of College of Policing Selection and Assessment for their strategic and technical advice.

\(^1\) Members of the review of police initial recruitment working group included force representatives, Home Office, representation from police staff associations and Higher Education Forum.
Introduction

The College of Policing undertook a review of police initial recruitment between September 2015 and June 2016. This was in response to concerns from the police service that the current model of police recruitment may not be designed for the current and future recruitment needs of police forces.

1.1 Purpose of review
These concerns were driven by changes in local recruitment needs, including the need to recruit for more diverse workforces, and by strategic developments in police professionalisation, including implementing the College’s Leadership Review.

The objectives of the review are threefold:
- identify what is important to force recruiters and key stakeholders in a future recruitment model
- identify best practice and industry standards
- assess the latest evidence base for effective selection and assessment and recommend further investigation where the evidence base is less clear.

This report will outline the methodology and main findings of the review, and will present some recommendations for implementation in the short term (eg, piloting a new recruitment process) and for consideration and implementation in the medium to longer term.

The College of Policing aims to promote an evidence-based practice approach whereby actions and interventions are based on and supported by the best available evidence. This review summarises the evidence on which decisions about effective selection processes can be based.

1.2 Why is police recruitment important?
The majority of policing’s expenditure is on people, making them the most expensive asset. Making the right selection choice is essential to the success of the police service and wellbeing of its staff.

Identifying an effective selection solution will enable the police service to select people who meet the current and future demands of policing as a profession, while minimising the likelihood of selecting individuals who are unable to cope with the demanding role of a police officer and the consequent negative outcomes for individuals and forces. As mentioned earlier, the solution must be based on the best available evidence base.

1.3 Current recruitment model
The current model of recruitment has been in place since 2002. Prior to 2002, forces designed and
delivered their own recruitment processes. A report in 1999 produced by the Home Affairs Select Committee expressed concern at the ‘disorganised and disjointed’ appearance of police recruitment procedures. In 2002, the Home Office produced a report on national recruit standards. This report made reference to the ‘development of the national assessment process’ and noted ‘...the product consists of a common selection process which assesses people to a national standard...’, which was approved by the Chief Constables’ Council in April 2003.

The national assessment centre was designed by the College of Policing (and its three precursor organisations). The current model has assessed over 140,000 candidates since its introduction. In recent years, the College has built flexibility into the recruitment model to allow forces to apply additional criteria that help to meet local recruitment needs. This includes increasing threshold standards or inviting candidates to a post-assessment centre in-force interview.

Police SEARCH RAC is a half-day assessment centre which includes a competency-based structured interview, a numerical ability test, a verbal ability test and four non-policing interactive exercises. Candidates must also demonstrate competence in written communication. Forces can choose to assess this in a number of ways, either at the assessment centre through assessing a statement-taking exercise or by requiring an equivalent qualification in written English (Functional Skills Level 2).

In addition, the College of Policing has developed a competency-based questionnaire (CBQ) as a sifting tool for police forces. The CBQ has been developed so it can be implemented by forces on a local level as a sifting tool for special constables, PCSOs, and PCs.

The review revealed that the current Police SEARCH RAC model, while being a robust assessment process, has a number of limitations identified by forces which use the assessment centre. These limitations include a perceived lack of flexibility of the process and a need for forces to run additional post-assessment centre processes in order to assess candidate’s values and organisational fit.

These concerns will be addressed through this review. In particular, appropriate values for policing are being analysed and incorporated into the review of the policing competency model overseen by the College of Policing and supported by Kornferry Hay Group (see section 2.4).
Methodology

2.1 Establishing an evidence-base
An REA was conducted as part of the review. An REA is a research procedure which gathers and reviews evidence in a streamlined, systematic way in the time available and generates key points in a format which is easy to understand and digest. The Review of Police Initial Recruitment REA included four specific questions aimed at offering a thorough and robust synthesis of the evidence:

- What is effective in assessing people’s suitability for a job/role?
- What marketing methods are effective at attracting talented people to join organisations?
- What interventions have been shown to be effective in allowing candidates to perform to their best ability?
- What interventions (e.g., technology and innovation) have been shown to be effective in supporting organisational recruitment processes?

In total, we considered over 8,000 article abstracts. We developed an evidence base by identifying robust research evidence and identifying areas for future exploration that have potential to benefit the future of police recruitment.

See appendix 1 for an overview of types of articles that were considered as offering robust evidence for this review (e.g., meta-analysis, systematic reviews) and for terminology associated with technical qualities of selection procedures (e.g., predictive validity, construct validity, reliability). Further details regarding the REA methodology are outlined in appendix 2.

2.2 Stakeholder engagement
Forces and key stakeholders were invited to a Review of Police Initial Recruitment event at Ryton on 8 December 2015. The event was designed to provide an opportunity for delegates to learn about the scope of the review and to share concerns and opportunities. The event was attended by 68 delegates from across policing.

Throughout the engagement day, forces engaged in a variety of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) exercises to identify principal themes. The majority of the concerns and opportunities will be addressed through this review or through other College of Policing work programmes. For example, length of time from application to starting and attracting quality diverse applicants is addressed by Recommendation 4 and recruitment technology is addressed in Recommendation 6. Further information regarding data collated from forces is outlined in appendix 2.
The Workforce Coordination Committee (WCC), led by CC Giles York, has been supportive of this review and has shared views on the future direction of police initial recruitment. These include considerations around whether or not the right capabilities and values are being assessed. This consideration will be addressed by a project to review the Policing Professional Framework (PPF) and work to implement Recommendation 3 of the Leadership Review – see 2.4.

The WCC also raised considerations around setting standards and attracting diverse police recruitment applicant pools. These considerations are addressed in this report.

The WCC recommended that work is started as soon as possible to design and pilot a new effective selection process in consultation with the MPS, a consultancy specialising in selection and a number of additional pilot forces, supported by the College of Policing.

The College of Policing undertook a consultation of the Police Initial Recruitment interim report for a four-week period between April and May 2016. Key themes identified through the consultation were:

- concerns that changes might be introduced for their own sake as opposed to a clear indication that the change will deliver a positive benefit to policing
- a desire for more information on the likely costs and resources associated with changes
- a concern that forces may lose local control over recruitment.

Amendments (eg, making evaluation and change management clearer to the reader) have been made to this final report in response to concerns identified through the interim report consultation.

2.3 Peer review
A number of individuals have been asked to peer review this final report. These include individuals who are external to the College of Policing and who either have a background in operational HR at senior manager level or are experienced occupational psychologists.

The peer review involved quality assuring the conduct of the review and the reporting of findings. Peer reviewers were asked to consider whether the report makes a useful contribution to the development of policy and practice and whether the report is publishable (as academic research).

Overall, peer reviewers rated this review as good in terms of its readability and structure, relevance to policy and practice and in terms of methodology. Reviewers critiqued earlier versions, however, as requiring more evidence of the methodology applied and evaluation strategy. These have been included as appendices in this final version of the report. Reviewers felt that the report would be best published as a practitioner report, which is the intention of this report.

There will be opportunities to consider academic publishing of research work associated with recommendations of this review, such as experimental research designs associated with attraction initiatives and initiatives to maximise assessment outcomes.

2.4 Related projects and programmes of work
Updating the PPF behavioural competencies. The PPF is the competency framework for the police service. It is currently subject to a review and redesign so that the competencies better reflect the behaviours required for performance in the modern police service. The review of the PPF is being steered by the College with support from Kornferry Hay Group. The review will consider culture, values, and capabilities that are considered essential for effective policing now and in the future. The delivery of the revised PPF coincides with the reporting of this review and emerging developments will be used to underpin a pilot selection process for initial recruitment.

Leadership Review Recommendation 3. The College’s leadership review made a number of recommendations that are now being implemented across the service. Recommendation 3 is to embed the principles (values) that underpin the policing Code of Ethics into all local and national selection processes.

A programme of research has been completed into how values-based recruitment is best embedded in organisational practice. This will inform the development of national processes as well as guidance for forces in introducing values into local recruitment. The values underpinning the Code of Ethics will be analysed and incorporated into the competency model being developed by Hay Group.
Findings

The intended outcome of the review is to develop a recruitment model that:

- is valid, reliable and fair
- generates sufficient quality of applicants who meet national standards
- minimises adverse impact against underrepresented applicants
- applies the latest innovation in technology and innovation.

The findings and recommendations of this review are focused on practical outcomes that lead to a fair, valid and reliable recruitment model, and better attract underrepresented applicants into policing. The findings are structured into five sections which cover the following areas:

- effective selection – including effective selection procedures, fairness and diversity, and standard setting
- attraction and marketing
- maximising assessment outcomes
- technology and innovation for recruitment
- an evaluation strategy for all review recommendations.

The review provides recommendations regarding selection processes (eg, attracting applicants) and selection procedures (eg, pilot assessment centre). There is a strong link between effective processes to attract quality applicants and identifying quality candidates to appoint in role. In this way, the latter stages (eg, assessment centre) of a well-designed recruitment model confirm the effectiveness of earlier stages (eg, attraction and sifting).

While the evaluation section is the last section of this report, it is important to guard against changes being made to the current police initial recruitment process for their own sake. Changes need to be made because they represent an improvement on the current model. All changes brought about through the recommendations made in this report will be evaluated on this basis.
Effective selection

4.1 Overview
Critical to the success of an effective selection process is identifying the characteristics (knowledge, skills, competencies, personal qualities, values) that are necessary for effective performance in the target role. The College of Policing is conducting a review of capabilities of all police officers as part the PPF review.

Once effective criteria are defined, the evidence base points to including selection procedures that are proven to predict performance on the job, while paying careful attention to including selection procedures that limit applicant subgroups differences as far as possible.

4.2 Predictive validity
From a practical point of view, the most important property of a personnel assessment method is predictive validity – the ability of the selection measure to predict future job performance (Schmidt and Hunter 1998, Ployhart and Holtz 2008). Predictive validity is represented by a statistical correlation between the selection method (predictor variable) and a measure of performance on the job (dependent variable). Predictive validity studies are difficult to achieve in practice for various practical reasons, but there is a wealth of academic research which enables us to make judgements about the relative predictive validity of different measures.

The criteria that this review used to classify a selection procedure’s ability to predict on-the-job performance is based on a standard and widely accepted classification of correlation coefficients (Smith and Robertson 1993) that are outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Predictive validity (ability to predict on the job performance)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 0.5</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.40 – 0.49</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.30 – 0.39</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0.30</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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Table 1 – Predictive validity correlation coefficients

The table overleaf outlines the predictive validity of each of the selection measures included in this review, as identified through the review of the evidence base.
Importance of cognitive ability: The evidence shows that the predictor variable with the strongest predictability of performance in most jobs is cognitive ability, sometimes termed general mental ability (Schmidt and Hunter 1998, Silvester and Dykes 2005). The construct of cognitive ability is highly related to what is often termed intelligence or intellectual ability.

The extent to which a selection method is a measure of cognitive ability therefore has an impact on the method’s validity. Assessment centre exercises that ‘load’ heavily on cognitive ability (eg, those that require analysis and decision making) typically have higher predictive validity overall than those that have less ‘cognitive load’ (that is, they tend to predict overall job performance more accurately).

Conversely, assessment centre exercises, SJTs, or other methods that are more heavily based on interpersonal skills or personality characteristics may have less ability to predict overall job performance. They may, however, be more highly related to specific aspects of job performance, eg, building effective working relationships.

It is therefore essential to be clear about the criteria being selected for and how best to measure those criteria (Arthur and Villado 2008). When it comes to evaluation, being clear about what aspects of job performance are likely to be predicted by the measures ensures a more accurate assessment of the validity and utility of the process.

Interview type: Interviews are perhaps one of the most common assessment methods and many authors report employment interviews as being good predictors of on-the-job performance. Huffcutt et al (2001) propose that employment interviews are good predictors because they assess knowledge, skills, and abilities directly related to a job and assess cognitive ability to some extent.

The predictive validity of interviews is moderated by the level of structure in the interview. Unstructured interviews typically have moderate predictive validity while structured interviews may reach very high predictive validity.

A new interview technique has been introduced in recent years called the multiple mini interview. The MMI was first introduced (Eva et al 2004) due to a need for an interview process with robust psychometric properties unlike many traditional interviews (Husband and Dowell 2013). The MMI is an interview format that uses many short independent assessments, typically in a timed circuit, to obtain an aggregate score of each candidate’s performance. The bulk of the evidence underpinning the MMI’s validity is from undergraduate and graduate-entry settings – in particular, admission to medical school.

Rosenfeld et al (2008) suggest that the MMI may yield higher reliability and be more cost effective than traditional interviews, due to more questions being asked through the MMI format. Razack et al (2009) showed that applicants and assessors had positive feedback about the MMI, rating it more highly on fairness, accuracy and enjoyableness than traditional interviews. Positive feedback was also received by applicants who
had been unsuccessful in the process.

**Personality assessment:** The relationship of personality characteristics to job performance is more complicated than that of cognitive ability to job performance. Some major and well-respected research studies (Barrick and Mount 1991) have found that measures of conscientiousness have by far the strongest relationship with work-related behaviour and outcomes. This was found to be true across all occupational groups and across all types of job outcomes measured. More recent research in a policing setting (Sanders 2007) found that conscientiousness was not predictive of good performance, however (from either supervisor or police chief ratings). Barrett et al (2003) in a meta-analysis found that only emotional stability emerged as a significant predictor of performance.

It is likely that personality characteristics are more predictive of specific subsets of work performance rather than overall performance. There are also some more complex relationships with job performance where, in some cases, an average level of a personality characteristic is desirable but low and high levels are not (Converse et al 2014). An example of this curvilinear relationship is conscientiousness – low conscientiousness is likely to result in poor work performance in most jobs but in some jobs high levels of conscientiousness may result in a lack of flexibility, which may be detrimental to performance.

There is some evidence of usefulness of personality assessment in selection. If used early in an assessment process, personality testing can help to identify applicants who would be disqualified in the later phases and could therefore be removed from the process. For example, Denning (2007) found a significant relationship between scores on pre-offer personality tests and the likelihood of passing a background check and becoming a police officer.

In summary, personality assessment is likely to have limited utility in predicting performance in a large-scale entry-level recruitment process, however the utility in relation to predicting disqualification should be explored further.

**Assessment centres** are a well-established selection approach that uses multiple methodologies and multiple assessors, and combines the information gathered across the entire centre to arrive at a decision. This multi-rater, multi-method approach is designed to increase objectivity and fairness by reducing reliance on single observations. The literature reviewed to date has reported that assessment centres (ACs) possess a moderate ability to predict on-the-job performance. Some ACs, however, use selection methods that are more predictive of on-the-job performance than others. Therefore, the ability of an AC to predict on-the-job performance depends on the AC’s content. If an AC is made up of job samples or structured interview or cognitive ability testing, then the AC’s predictive ability should be high.

**Situational judgment tests:** SJTs are one of the most researched selection methods over the past 20 years – 59 empirical studies were published between 1990 and 2014 (Campion and Ployhart 2014). SJTs typically present candidates with a scenario and a series of options which the candidate is asked to rank, rate or select from. The test gives an indication of judgement or decision making against a pre-set scoring template.

To some extent, the content of SJTs may be similar to interviews or assessment centres, in that they are often developed in such a way that they assess a combination of multiple different constructs or composite competencies (Chan and Schmitt 2005). This is in contrast to cognitive ability tests, which are usually developed to reflect one construct (Whetzel and McDaniel 2009), for example, verbal ability or numerical ability.

### 4.3 Diversity, validity and fairness

The review of the research evidence highlighted the importance of effective selection processes contributing to the diversity of an organisation being valid, inherently fair, and lawful.

This goal is challenging and complex, as the evidence shows that selection procedures that best predict on-the-job performance (eg, cognitive ability tests or indirect assessments of cognitive ability) have the greatest racial and ethnic subgroup differences (eg, individuals of Black, Asian or minority ethnic background perform less well).

A number of authors have claimed that there are subgroup differences across a number of selection procedures (for example, Berry et al 2011, Bobko and Roth 2013, Ployhart and Holtz 2008). The table below outlines subgroup differences for the commonly occurring selection procedures in the scientific literature.
Table 3 – Degree of subgroup difference for selection predictor procedures

Some work samples exercises possess greater assessment of cognitive ability than others. Work samples that include more cognitive ability will have higher subgroup differences than work samples that do not, which will possess lower subgroup differences. There is no significant difference in MMI scores associated with age, gender or race (eg, Cox et al 2015).

The literature refers to the twin organisational pressures of meeting workforce diversity targets while simultaneously maintaining the validity of organisational selection procedures as the ‘diversity-validity dilemma’ (eg, Ployhart and Holtz 2008). This is illustrated by table 3 above, where many of the selection procedures that possess a better ability to predict on-the-job performance also possess the greatest subgroup differentials.

Berry et al (2011) claimed there to be four possible causes of subgroup differences affecting the test scores of minority and majority group test takers in cognitive ability tests:

- range restrictions (eg, lack of evidence that those who are unsuccessful at the recruitment stage would go on to be less effective in the role – this has a greater impact if high levels of black or minority ethnic applicants are unsuccessful)
- psychometric characteristics (ie, measurement error/bias in the measure itself)
- contextual influences (eg, stereotype threat or other factors which may differentially affect the true performance of the minority group)
- true differences between subgroups.

Although the above research is applied specifically to cognitive ability tests, it is plausible that the same four possible causes apply to subgroup differences in other forms of selection procedure. Relying on measures of cognitive ability may in itself be considered a cause of differences. Broadly, the interventions to reduce subgroup differences will vary according to their cause. These are summarised below:

Table 4 – Interventions to reduce subgroup differences
A further option is to attempt to compensate for subgroup differences by applying positive action. Under section 159 of the Equality Act 2010, organisations are allowed to apply positive provision – that is, to select a member of an underrepresented group, where a number of candidates are equally qualified.

This has led practitioners and researchers to consider whether candidate score bands could be used to prioritise those from underrepresented groups (Ployhart and Holtz 2008). Score bandings may allow candidates who share a score band to be considered equally qualified, thus enabling the selecting organisation to prioritise those from underrepresented groups. Score bandings should be explored in association with the provisions of section 159 of the Equality Act 2010, however, the exact meaning of the legislation has not yet been tested, and it is not clear whether such an application would be lawful.

Although adverse impact ratio (AIR) is a common and accepted metric for understanding subgroup differences in pass rates, there are alternative statistics that can be used, such as Cohen’s $d$. Cohen’s $d$ is a statistical measure of the standardised difference between the average (mean) scores of two groups, sometimes termed effect size. Like the AIR, there is meaning associated with the value of Cohen’s $d$ – eg, effect sizes of 0.2 and below are considered ‘low’. See appendix 1 for more detail. Future analysis of adverse impact should consider both effect size and AIR.

4.4 Recruitment standard setting
In addition to considerations around choosing appropriate selection procedures, there also needs to be consideration of how the standards (eg, cut-off scores) are set for those selection procedures and overall selection process. One of the key themes from the stakeholder research conducted as part of this review was that standards may need to be set higher than currently.

The most important factor when considering the appropriate standard is that those selected are able to cope with the demands of the training and the job for which they have been selected. Depending on the criteria, it is often the case that those who exceed the standard may demonstrate greater potential for progression.

It will always be the case that there will be false positives (where someone is selected who does not meet the requirements of the role) and false negatives (where someone who could have been successful in the role was not selected). The aim is to minimise both types of error but the organisational risk appetite will dictate whether standards are set higher (minimising false positives) or lower (minimising false negatives).

Furthermore, the issue of adverse impact is again raised when considering standard setting. For example, when national standards are lower, the rates of unsuccessful black and minority ethnic applicants are lower (AIR meets the desirable ratio of $\geq 0.8$). There is less disproportionality between black and minority ethnic applicants and white applicants when national standards are lower. When the standards are lower, however, this also means that a greater number of candidates from all ethnic backgrounds are successful.

When successful applicant pools are larger, it presents two key issues. Firstly, either there are more candidates in the successful pool who all need to be selected, or a lawful method needs to be put in place for prioritising applicants. Secondly, selecting from a lower standard leads to the likelihood of extra support being needed by these candidates, where some might have difficulty in reaching operational competence.

4.5 National minimum standards for recruitment
There was a strong theme in the stakeholder research about the need for a consistent national standard for police recruits. This was echoed in Recommendation 9 of the Leadership Review. It is essential that all recruits to forces in England and Wales meet the same minimum standards of competence and ability, for reasons of public confidence, interoperability, national consistency and economy of practice.

At the same time, however, it is clear that differing forces have differing needs in relation to volume and quality of applicants, and in some forces there may be a drive towards assessing for specific criteria. For example, the MPS identified important differences between their own and other force needs in the ‘London Factor’ research. There is a need, therefore, to allow for local flexibility to meet local needs, while at the same time maintaining an agreed national standard that all recruits must meet.

4.6 Modular recruitment process
A related point is the view that a replacement process ought to take account of the differing needs of other entry-level policing roles such as special constable and PCSO.

The data from the current process indicates that, on average, special constables perform better than civilian candidates at Police SEARCH RAC. Not all special
constables are demonstrating competence at Police SEARCH RAC, however, which has caused concern for some stakeholders.

The College of Policing has developed a standardised selection process for special constables but it is not currently adopted by every force in the country. In addition, there are differences across the country in relation to how special constables are used (some are used as substitutes for regular officers and are single-crewed, others are used to provide support to regular officers).

Since special constables are volunteers, turnover rates can be high and forces need to balance their investment in their selection and training with the potential return.

There was generally strong support in the stakeholder engagement for a national process for special constables which could form a modular part of the regular recruit process. This would allow candidates who had passed the special constable process to be exempt from certain aspects of the national recruit selection process.

There was less support for assessment of prior competence taking the place of all or part of the national recruit selection process. This is due to concerns about the need for a national assessment standard, and concerns about the subjectivity that may be present in work-based or supervisors assessments.

4.7 Generic vs. specialist
There are a number of strategic work programmes that are currently focused on the structure and grading of policing (Recommendation 2 of the Leadership Review, to ‘review the rank and grading structures in policing across warranted and staff roles’), the future workforce framework (developed by the Workforce Futures programme by MPS and Deloitte) and workforce competencies (the review of the PPF by the Hay Group), including values and behaviour. These programmes support the direction of career pathways and entry into specialisms.

While the direction of travel is indicating policing recruitment may cater for specialist roles at entry level (eg, cybercrime and detective specialists), the landscape has not yet been fully defined. New police recruitment assessments should be based around a core generic set of standards (behaviours and values) at which all applicants need to demonstrate competence. This position should be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

4.8 Recommendations based on the review of findings on effective selection
The following three recommendations are based on the findings of the review which relate to effective selection and assessment processes.

Recommendation 1: Pilot a new police recruitment process

The College of Policing will work with the Metropolitan Police Service to develop the specification for a new recruit assessment process. This will be based on the findings of the best available evidence on improving selection decisions and minimising adverse impact on minority groups.

The new process will be designed by a commercial partner and piloted by the Metropolitan Police Service and selected pilot forces. The commercial provider will be responsible for designing materials and assessor training, while pilot forces will be responsible for delivering the trial process. Pilot forces will be encouraged to work together to decide how best to deliver the trial. The College of Policing will oversee the standard setting, quality assurance of design work and trial assessment process, and evaluation of the trial assessment process.

To be delivered by: The College of Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, pilot forces, consultancy (specialising in selection).
Target timeframe: New process ready to be piloted in 2017.
Recommendation 2: Consideration of modular process for PCs, PCSOs, and special constables

The College of Policing will consider the design of a new national process that will enable modular assessment of special constables, PCSOs, and regular officers. Where possible, the design will allow for performance on special constable or PCSO processes to be credited at the national recruit selection process.

To be delivered by: The College of Policing and forces.
Target timeframe: Scoping of possible solutions by March 2018.

Recommendation 3: Consideration of additional criteria to meet forces’ needs

The College of Policing will outline core national minimum standards of competence that all new police constables will need to meet, with an option for forces to include additional criteria to meet local workforce development needs.

To be delivered by: The College of Policing and forces.
Target timeframe: Scoping possible solutions by March 2018.
The new recruit assessment process will be piloted and evaluated across a diverse range of candidates from a number of forces to ensure that any changes to the current process are fit for purpose. The MPS (planned to be completed in 2017) will be responsible for delivering the pilot process. The College will take a lead on the quality assurance and evaluation processes. Associated costs and resource needs will be made available at the earliest opportunity.

For sifting, both situational judgment testing and personality testing should be trialled. While the review acknowledges concerns over the ability of personality testing to predict work performance, it also recognises that personality testing may be useful to screen out undesirable characteristics linked to an applicant's personal integrity – similar sifting models have proven useful in the United States.

During 2016, the College will specify the sifting tools that will be trialled and evaluated. There is no plan to make sifting tools a compulsory part of the recruitment model. Once the sifting tools have been trialled and evaluated, however, the College will offer guidance around their effectiveness.

While further work is required in developing the new recruit assessment process, it is proposed, based on the evidence base, that the assessment process includes current and relevant work sample tests, job-relevant cognitive ability tests, MMIs, and measures job knowledge, cultural fit and values.

There are a number of benefits to a modular approach to police initial recruitment which include:

- an opportunity to streamline career pathways across PCSO, special constable, and police constable roles
- creating efficiencies and reducing costs through removing duplicated assessments
- an opportunity to increase standardisation across all new recruit roles across 43 forces
- increased opportunity to collate data, analyse, and identify what works.

Further consultation is required to identify the mechanisms by which a modular approach would work, including:

- identifying similarities and differences across each of the recruit roles
- evidence established over the parity of a modular process with the national process for recruiting police constables
- credit that holding a position of a PCSO or special constable may or may not play in sifting PC applicants.

Work will need to be commenced to establish what qualification standards that new recruits will need to meet (eg, level 3 qualification) in the shorter term and also in the longer term (for the introduction of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework).

This recommendation is not suggesting that all new police recruits need to have been either a PCSO or a special constable as a prerequisite to becoming a police constable, as there are likely to be good reasons as to why this is not possible.

Consideration will need to be given to how threats to standardisation of national recruitment can be avoided. A potential risk of differing local processes is the ease of transferability of officers between forces. This would be a challenge if additional criteria across forces were not comparable but still required for candidates to meet.

Further consultation is required to identify how similar and different each of the forces additional recruitment requirements are, with an aim of packaging similarity of needs into national recruitment standards.

The College of Policing will produce guidance for using additional assessment requirements to meet local needs. The guidance will include principles underpinning best practice, including the need for additional criteria to lead to assessments that are fair, valid, reliable, and defensible.
Attraction and marketing

5.1 Overview

The evidence on effective selection points to a number of actions that can be taken to improve selection, but the quality of the candidate pool has a large impact on both the cost and effectiveness of selection methods and on the outcomes in relation to adverse impact on minority groups. Attracting high-calibre candidates to apply to the police service is therefore of critical importance.

The research evidence in relation to attraction and marketing considered as part of this review broadly falls into the following themes:

- research on models of recruitment where attraction forms an important initial stage (eg, Rynes and Cable 2003, Dineen and Soltis 2010)
- research on organisational characteristics that applicants find attractive
- research on interventions to attract a diverse pool of applicants in order to increase workforce diversity
- research on interventions that best predict person-organisational fit.

5.2 Recruitment models

Recruitment models (eg, Dineen and Solis 2010) have been put forward that include generating viable candidates, maintaining the status of viable applicants, and post-offer closure. In addition, environmental/contextual considerations (eg, employer brand and personality, diversity, and supply and demand) have been found to be important.

Overall, it is essential to generate a large enough pool of applicants of acceptable quality. Generating viable candidates greatly determines the potential utility of the remainder of the recruitment process (Barber 1998). Therefore, organisations should focus their attention on attracting both quantity and quality of applicants (Collins and Han 2004, Cascoio and Boudreaux 2008) This may be particularly important if an organisation is looking to attract high-quality applicants from underrepresented groups. Adverse impact may be accentuated if the quality of candidates is not sufficient and equal to that in the majority group.

When it comes to maintaining the status of viable candidates, tendering offers in a timely manner helps to maximise the chances of an applicant accepting the job. Delays in the selection process can lead to attrition, especially among more qualified applicants. The most valued recruits are also the most likely to have several job offers (Boswell et al 2003), so paying attention to how their interest is maintained is critical.
Research indicates that the source through which organisations make initial contact with potential applicants (e.g., newspaper adverts, employee referrals) is important (Zottoli and Wanous 2000). Organisations are increasingly using their websites for recruitment activities, with internet recruitment emerging as a preferred mode for many job seekers. Sources can differ in effectiveness because they differ in the amount, type, richness and realism of the information they provide.

The literature indicates that providing more information about a job or organisation should positively influence applicant attraction to the organisation. Where job seekers are provided with incomplete information, they will make inferences based on their prior knowledge (Allen, Mahto and Otondo 2007). This may lead to candidates self-selecting out of a process based on information which is not true. There is also evidence that suggests that aesthetic characteristics of the job advert itself (such as font, pictures, colour etc.) may influence job seeker attitudes (Cober et al 2003).

5.3 Organisational characteristics

The literature outlines organisational characteristics that have been found to be beneficial in organisational attractiveness. For example, a meta-analysis by Chapman et al (2005) identified six categories that are related to attraction in varying degrees. These are:

- job and organisational attributes
- recruiter characteristics
- perceptions of the recruitment process
- perceived fit
- perceived alternatives
- hiring expectancies.

In addition, Carless and Wintle (2007) found links between various work-life benefits and organisational attraction.

There are a number of studies that make the link between the reputation of an organisation and the attractiveness of an organisation (Turban and Cable 2003). Job seekers are likely to be attracted to organisations that enjoy favourable reputations. Such organisations may expect larger applicant pools and higher quality applicants.

These findings have an implication for policing, depending on the reputation of the police force that an applicant is applying to. More research is needed, however, to examine the short-term and long-term effect of negative image or reputation, or the mechanisms that might explain changes in image or reputation over time (Dineen and Solis 2010). Section 5.4 (below) provides examples of organisational activity that might assist in enhancing the reputation of an organisation.

5.4 Interventions to attract diverse applicant pools

Due to a lack of an organised consolidated diversity recruitment framework, practitioners are often left to design recruitment strategies without the benefit of the latest research (Ryan and Tipping 2004). This section provides examples of encouraging evidence around attracting diverse applicant pools.

The success of targeted recruitment appears contingent on an organisation conveying to prospective minority applicants that it values diversity (e.g., Thomas and Wise 1999). The table below highlights activity (based on the findings of Avery and McKay 2006) that is worth considering in order to convey the impression to women and underrepresented groups that an organisation values diversity.

The research provides some evidence that actions taken by an organisation to convey the impression to women and minorities that an organisation values or is seeking diversity will be moderated by a number of variables such as:

- Diversity awards received by an organisation. The diversity award might be based on factors that have little bearing on the treatment of women or minority employees, however.
- Perception by an applicant of what is behind an organisation’s motivation (truly diverse vs. legal compliance – avoiding the appearance of being discriminatory and the possibility of litigation). Unjustified workforce diversity programs elicit unfavourable reactions from women and minorities (Richard and Kirby 1999). There is also evidence that minority applicants want to be perceived as having been treated fairly and not as receiving preferential treatment (Cropanzano et al 2005).
- Diversity reputation – a poor diversity reputation can make it difficult for organisations to recruit talent, especially among female and minority job seekers (Greening and Turban 2000).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational action to convey the impression to women and minorities that an organisation values diversity</th>
<th>Example supporting evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Placing recruitment ads in targeted media</strong>&lt;br&gt;(eg, media more frequently viewed by minorities)</td>
<td>Placing ads in media viewed more frequently by minority populations should result in a more diverse composition of respondents (Paddison 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portraying highly diverse ads</strong></td>
<td>As ad diversity increases, so too does minority job seekers’ attraction to the organisation and perceptions of fit (Perkin et al 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presenting inclusiveness policy statements</strong>&lt;br&gt;(eg, reference to diversity management programmes or equal employment opportunity policy) in ads</td>
<td>Minority men and white women were more attracted to companies that included statements about their commitment to diversity in their recruitment ad than those who did not (Rau and Hyland 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employing a female or minority recruiter</strong></td>
<td>Individuals are more likely to be attracted to those perceived as highly similar to themselves (Kilduff and Bass 1998), although some authors have failed to find confirmation of similarity-attraction phenomenon (eg, Cable and Judge 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation in diversity fairs</strong></td>
<td>Research in this area is scarce, however, Han and Collins (2002) found that firms’ participation in job fairs positively predicted applicants’ awareness of, perceived attributes of, perceived quality of, and attraction to companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presenting evidence of successful diversity management</strong>&lt;br&gt;(eg, awards that have been received, access to mentoring) through ads and representatives</td>
<td>Minority and female job seekers tend to look for information regarding a company’s diversity management (Thomas and Wise 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publicised sponsorship of minority and women’s causes</strong></td>
<td>Job seekers tend to be more attracted to organisations that act in a socially responsible (eg, corporate social responsibility) manner (Turban and Greening 1997) and Collins and Han (2004) found that sponsorship helps to produce higher-quality applicant pools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use defensive organisational impression management tactics during recruitment</strong> to convey the impression to women and minorities that the organisation seeks diversity.</td>
<td>The use of disclaimers, apologies and prosocial behaviour (Avery and McKay 2006) could lead to positive associations with the organisation that applies these tactics (for example, in the case of previous discrimination, formal apologies may prove useful if the company accepts responsibility for its actions and demonstrates regret by acting to rectify its discriminatory actions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – Organisational action to convey the impression to women and minorities that an organisation values diversity (adapted from Avery and McKay 2006).
Social identity – applicants higher in ethnic identity are more likely to be positive towards organisations that included a diversity initiative in their recruitment brochures than organisations that did not (Kim and Gelfand 2003).

Social influence – there is some emerging evidence that a policing career may be more attractive to applicants in close proximity to family members or friends with policing careers. This is based on recent studies which have shown that students are more likely to complete university successfully if their parents had graduated during their lives, and studies that indicate that the special forces are almost a ‘family business’.

Using video media employee testimonials has been shown to increase the attractiveness of an organisation among applicants, especially among ethnic minority candidates (Walker et al 2009). Employee testimonials in general are seen to provide credible (Van Hoye and Lievens 2007) and realistic insights into organisational culture (Cober et al 2000), but the effects for ethnic minority candidates is far higher when testimonials are by people of the same ethnicity as the applicant. These findings are supported (Avery 2003, Avery, Hernandez and Hebl 2004, Perkins, Thomas and Taylor 2000) and provide an opportunity to increase the attractiveness of the police service to ethnic minority candidates. The success of video media employee testimonials may be linked to research on the use of ‘word of mouth’ as a recruitment source. Van Hoye and Lievens (2009) suggested that positive word of mouth can have a strong effect of organisational attractiveness and the decision to apply for a role.

5.5 Person-organisation fit and values-based recruitment

There is an established evidence base for the notion of person-organisation fit (Ravlin and Ritchie 2006). Through recruitment, organisations hope to build an applicant pool from which they can select one or more employees who best fit their organisation. Recruitment processes that attract individuals who are more likely to fit the organisation and screen out those that do not reduce the time and expense involved in the selection process (Stevens and Szmerkovsty 2010).

Chatman (1987) defines person-organisation fit as ‘the congruence between the norms and values of organisations and the values of persons’. Recruiting for values is becoming more popular in the public and private sector, for good reasons. According to the literature, person-organisation fit is positively associated with engagement (Ünal and Turgut 2015), job satisfaction, organisational satisfaction, co-worker satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, organisational commitment, contextual performance, employee’s trust in their manager and negatively associated with intention to leave and burnout (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson 2005, Leiter, Gascón and Martinez-Jarreta 2009, Scherer, Allen and Harp 2015).

As a result, if an organisation recruits successfully for values, this should lead to increased person-organisation fit, which in turn leads to a number of positive outcomes for individual and organisation.

In order for the above to occur, however, the organisation’s values must be clearly defined and be true of the organisation. If this is not the case, the selection process may not hire someone with a true fit. Values should be made clear at the start, and throughout the recruitment process, allowing potential employees to reflect on their own values and consider if there is a match. For this reason, values are central to the PPF review, as mentioned earlier in this report.

6.6 Recommendations based on attraction and marketing findings.

Targeted recruitment (eg, attraction) cannot be improved without first understanding why previous efforts have failed (Avery and McKay 2006). During the review, forces provided examples of initiatives that had been used to attract high-quality candidates to policing. Suggestions included proactive relationship building with young people (eg, early at school, college or university), using mentors/role models to provide advice during the recruitment process, using testimonials and case studies, and using social media to identify target groups.

While this review recognises that there is progress being made in some areas of police attraction (eg, BME Progression 2018 Programme, Police Now), there remains limited national evidence on which attraction initiatives work best. For this reason we recommend that further research is undertaken to establish what works in attracting high-quality candidates to the police service. The evidence should include historical, current and future attraction campaigns.

Secondly, it is important to establish an evidence base around why applicants from underrepresented groups are not applying to the police service in
sufficient numbers for forces to meet workforce development targets. This will build on the current work being undertaken by the BME Progression 2018 Programme.

Thirdly, guidance materials should be developed to help inform implementation of effective attraction campaigns. Lastly, a framework should be set up to allow all forces to share best practice among each other in relation to marketing and attraction.

A systematic and coherent approach to national attraction and marketing is likely to improve the brand image of policing. This in turn is likely to make policing more attractive to prospective applicants.

Similar to other recommendations in this review, careful consideration needs to be given to the development of interventions that meet national attraction and marketing needs while allowing for flexibility for forces to meet local needs. In order to achieve this, more needs to be known about the similarities and differences of attraction and marketing need across forces.

There needs to be careful consideration of the impact that the twin goals of attracting talented applicants and attracting underrepresented applicants have on one another. For instance, further work is required to answer the question of whether different strategies are required to meet these goals.

**Recommendation 4: Establish an evidence base for police attraction and marketing**

Research should be conducted to identify attraction and marketing interventions that are effective specifically in police recruitment and to share interventions that have been demonstrated to work effectively across multiple policing contexts.

To be delivered by: The College of Policing, forces.
Maximising outcomes

6.1 Overview
The third research question the review set out to answer was: ‘what interventions have been shown to be effective in allowing candidates to perform to their best ability?’ This question stems from the notion that differential success rates for some minority groups may be at least partly due to contextual factors affecting the performance of individuals in those groups. There has also been a recent growth of interest in interventions driven by ‘behavioural insights’ which have shown promise in reducing sub-group differences.

The literature around maximising performance was generally found to be less empirically robust than those in other areas of the review, however we identified a number of promising areas which should be explored further.

The majority of studies published in this area were conducted in experimental contexts rather than real selection and assessment settings. Some have also put groups of candidates in ‘negative’ conditions which have been detrimental to performance. While this helps to demonstrate potential effects, it would not be ethically possible to do this to candidates in real employment situations. Studies in this area are also mainly based on one-off experimental designs, meaning that caution needs be taken in terms of interpreting the results. Therefore it is imperative that we are confident that any intervention trialled or implemented will not inadvertently negatively affect any candidate groups.

6.2 Stereotype threat
There is a current interest in the concept of stereotype threat, and the impact that this might have on the performance of minority groups in selection contexts. Stereotype threat is a form of anxiety that results when a person is concerned that their results in a particular situation may substantiate a negative stereotype that exists about their group (Steele and Aronson 1995). Stereotype threat is thought to be most likely to occur when the test used for assessment is highly difficult (Nguyen and Ryan 2008). The increased anxiety caused by stereotype threat is thought to cause performance deficits.

Research has presented a number of ways in which stereotype threat may arise. For example, Kirnan et al (2009) suggest that being a token member of a group can make one feel as if they represent an entire gender/race, and being in a condition that increases the importance of performing well makes failure seem more threatening. Klein et al (2007) suggest that stereotype threat is induced when information about the test is presented in a way that emphasises that it is measuring cognitive ability, or that a particular group performs better or worse than others.
One way to potentially reduce stereotype threat is to make direct and explicit statements to dispute group differences in performance on a test (ie, that there is no difference in performance between minority and majority groups). This suggestion has resulted from experimental designs where this could be manipulated, however – it would not be ethical to use this approach in real selection scenarios where between-group differences may well exist. It may however be possible to use implicit strategies, such as framing a test as being used to assess skills and abilities relevant to the role, rather than cognitive ability.

Another potential way to reduce the effect of stereotype threat is to provide opportunities for candidates to reaffirm their sense of self or values. Self- affirmations, by reinforcing self-worth can alleviate the stress arising from threatening performance situations. They can take the form of reflections on personally important values or skills. Cohen et al (2006) and Miyake et al (2010) showed the particular potential of this methodology in reducing subgroup differences. The Behavioural Insights Team with Avon and Somerset Police showed this to be effective in a UK policing context.

6.3 Candidate reactions/perceptions
An important element of selection processes relates to how candidates perceive and react to their experience. Significantly, research has suggested that reactions can influence performance. Therefore it is desirable for candidates to have a positive perception of their assessment situation. In particular, not all candidate groups react in the same way. For example, a US study (Arvey et al 1990) found that applicant race was significantly related to test-taking motivation. White candidates demonstrated more test-taking motivation than black candidates, which had an impact on their performance in employment tests. McCarthy et al (2003) found that motivation is likely to be influenced by positive reactions to the selection process, which highlights the potential benefits of making the process a positive experience for candidates.

As discussed earlier in this report, research into cognitive testing continues to report mean differences between white and black and minority ethnic candidates. When tests are presented as being clearly relevant to the role, however, as opposed to referring to the underlying technical nature of the test or only stating the name of test, performance differences between black and white candidates were smaller (Ployhart 2003).

Explaining why a test is face valid or job-related may enhance test-taker perceptions, and describing the tests as measuring skills rather than intelligence results in greater focus on effort and increased action in the face of setbacks (Hong et al 1999). Ployhart (2003) concludes that, in order for subgroup differences to be reduced, the test must not only look face valid but also be explained as such. These points are addressed in Recommendation 5.

6.4 Transparency
A number of studies have investigated whether providing candidates with information about what they’re being assessed on enhances candidate performance. This may be done by providing candidates with information on the competencies that they’re being assessed against, the types of assessments that they will be undertaking and why they are being asked to do these. Most studies in this area link back to models of organisational justice which suggests that people are likely to have a more positive view of a selection process where candidates have received sufficient information about the selection situation (Gilland 1993).

Evidence in relation to the effectiveness of being transparent about the selection process appears to be mixed. Klehe et al (2008) found evidence that transparency can positively affect candidate performance through increasing perceived procedural fairness and reducing uncertainty on the part of the candidate, which enables them to present themselves more effectively.

Kleinmann et al (1996) and Burns et al (2008) did not find such clear effects of transparency on performance. It is generally accepted, however, that providing applicants with test preparation materials is a relatively simple and inexpensive way to limit any negative reactions that may be produced by selecting people out of the process. This approach doesn’t appear to compromise the testing process.

Candidates attending the Police SEARCH RAC already receive a document detailing what to expect at their assessment centre, as well as briefings before each element of the assessment. These could be reviewed in light of the evidence found in this review, however, to ensure that this is as useful and effective as possible.

6.5 Interviewer warmth
Consistent feedback in relation to the current Police SEARCH RAC competency-based structured interview relates to its ‘robotic’ and unwelcoming feel. The interview has been highly standardised in order that all candidates receive
the same experience, resulting in scripted introductions, questions and probes.

Farago et al (2013) suggest that organisations should incorporate 'warm behaviours' in their structured interviews. This provides organisations with the benefits of unstructured interviews (such as rapport building and putting candidates at ease) while maintaining standardisation. It is likely that, at the very least, this will improve candidates' positive perceptions of the interview process. Whether or not it has an impact on candidate performance has not been directly investigated.

The Behavioural Insights Team conducted a randomised control trial whereby the invitation email to an assessment process was manipulated to include a warmer and more encouraging tone. It is not possible to ascertain whether the positive effect on performance of black and minority ethnic candidates achieved in this study comes from this or from the concurrent affirmation-boosting exercise. It does, however, provide an interesting area for future investigation. Furthermore research by Carless and Imber (2007) suggested that interviewer characteristics, including warmth, had a significant positive impact on applicant anxiety.

6.6 Anxiety
Research has shown consistently that those with high levels of anxiety perform less well in evaluative or ego-threatening tasks than those with low levels of anxiety. Individuals with higher levels of trait anxiety will have a higher level of anxiety in response to a stressful situation. Anson et al (1984) suggest that these individuals are likely to perform less well in assessment and selection situations.

Despite it being recognised that people with higher levels of anxiety perform less well, no evidence was found in the literature of ways to reduce this, other than ways to reduce stereotype threat (which is a form of anxiety). If organisations take practical steps, such as providing additional information and using a warmer tone, candidates may find assessments less intimidating and will maximise their opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. Such practical steps are unlikely to eradicate anxiety for all candidates, however, particularly those more susceptible to anxiety.

6.7 Recommendations based on maximising assessment outcomes findings
While many stakeholders involved in the review acknowledged that there were likely to be clear benefits of reducing applicant anxiety, there is another possible advantage in maximising the performance of underrepresented groups. Specifically, those who may have been unsuccessful due to nerves might perform sufficiently well to be successful, if appropriate processes are put in place.

Activity associated with deciding which initiatives to pilot and identifying an appropriate evaluation strategy should be determined through the Review of Police Initial Recruitment working group.

Effort should be made to put in place evaluation of appropriate initiatives through live delivery of the existing Police SEARCH RAC, rather than waiting for the introduction of a new assessment centre (Recommendation 1).

Initiatives to maximise assessment outcomes will need to be carefully evaluated for their effectiveness before they are introduced to the national recruitment process. This includes a comparison of performance pre- and post-initiative. Should initiatives be successful, there will be guidance (eg, briefing for how assessors interact with candidates) provided to forces on how to maximise the impact of initiatives.

Recommendation 5: Enhancing applicant experience

To put in place evidence-based interventions aimed at improving applicant experience and subsequent enhancements in applicant performance. These interventions should be evaluated for their effectiveness before being introduced into recruit assessment processes.

To be delivered by: The College Policing, forces.
Target timeframe: Reporting intervention outcomes by March 2018.
Technology and innovation

7.1 Overview
The fourth research question the review set out to answer was: ‘what interventions have been shown to be effective in supporting organisational recruitment processes?’ This question is aimed at uncovering an evidence base of technology and innovation that is known to work in supporting organisational recruitment.

The literature for this area of the review was generally found to be less empirically robust than studies referenced elsewhere in this report. The studies do, however, provide an insight into emerging evidence around recruitment innovation and technology.

For the purposes of this research, innovation is defined as any change which benefits either individuals, groups, organisations or wider society (West and Farr 1990). This definition is important as it focuses on ensuring there is a resulting benefit from a change on at least one level. The recommendation which follows will consider benefits to individuals and the organisation so that future monitoring of any changes is defined against these factors.

Effort will be required to help guard against what some researchers have termed ‘pro-innovation bias’ (King and Anderson 2002, cited in Anderson 2003), where an improvement is automatically assumed due to a change from an existing method.

7.2 Current and future trends
There is a variety of innovation and technology that supports recruitment. This ranges from platforms that host total recruitment solutions, to shifts in communication with applicants (eg, social media influencing a shift from ‘talking at’ to ‘engaging with’ applicants) to new forms of assessment.

While other areas of this report cover recruitment innovation and technology related to new selection procedures (eg, video SJT, MMIs) and new evidence of useful attraction techniques (eg, video testimonials), this section is focused on technology and innovation that supports attracting and managing applicants and e-platforms that support recruitment.

Attracting and managing applicants: Recommendation 5 from the Leadership Review is taking steps towards advertising all vacancies nationally, allowing candidates to easily identify where jobs are available. Currently, however, there is no national advertising or marketing system which applicants can engage with to get further information on the job of police constable. Applicants have to visit multiple websites to get information about the role and where jobs are available, and are exposed to different marketing and attraction strategies from each website they visit. Many forces allow candidates to register and complete applications online, but this service is provided by external developers and can be very costly.
Consideration should be given to how candidates from all over the country apply for jobs at individual forces in a consistent and efficient manner. This could include integrating national marketing of new recruits with information relevant to each force. Greater consistency and efficiencies at the application stage would support Recommendation 5 from the Leadership Review, support attracting high-quality candidates to the police service, and increase the ability of the service to collect and report on recruitment data more efficiently.

**e-Recruitment platform:** Advances in recruitment technology rely on having computer and internet platforms which can host a variety of assessment methods. The increased use of technology in recruitment results in increased cost effectiveness, increased standardisation and perception that the organisation is modern and therefore more attractive (Weichmann and Ran 2003, Rozelle and Landis 2002, Morelli 2013).

The review identified the types of media which could be supported by an internet platform including the use of video, voice-over-internet protocol, simulations and webcam. Including a variety of media methods allows candidates to be assessed in different ways and improves candidate experiences (which supports Recommendation 5 of this review). Using assessment methods which are supported by modern technology, job-relevant and which are easily accessible increases the attractiveness of the police service to the highly technology-literate population of today and the future.

Currently there is no national IT recruitment platform which the College or the police service can use to deliver multiple assessment methods. Some police forces have signed up with external companies to provide these services, but there is no single, centralised system. Candidates may have to access different systems across forces. This can be confusing for candidates and is obviously costly, not only for each police force but for the police service as there are no benefits of economies of scale.

While the College of Policing does not currently have the remit to manage a national e-recruitment platform, 60% of review respondents felt that the College of Policing is the best place to host a national e-recruitment platform. These respondents felt that the College is a credible and neutral non-commercial organisation. Some respondents, however, felt that an external organisation would be better placed to develop and support this as they might have the technology already available and be more up to date with developments in this area.

The platform would need to be sufficiently robust and flexible to be used during an assessment centre or as part of a screening process. It should be able to host assessments developed by external providers which are purchased or designed for specific force needs. As mentioned earlier, it would be beneficial if the e-recruitment system developed included applicant tracking, assessment centre data management and marketing and attraction functionality.

To assist further progress of a national e-recruitment platform, there would need to be consideration of the similarities and differences of needs across the 43 forces. This would need to include establishing what technology is already in place and how new technology could either support or replace current technology.

**7.3 Candidate reactions**
Any innovations or changes which are made to the recruitment process need to be considered from the view of the candidate. While there is a body of research which states that applicants have largely positive reactions to increased use of technology in assessment centres (Reynolds, Sinar and McClough 2000 cited in Anderson 2003, Richman-Hirsch, Olson-Buchanan and Drasgow 2000, Ogilvie, Trusk and Blue 1999), other research shows that these reactions are mediated by other factors. Previous experience that candidates have with similar tests (Kravitz, Stinson and Chavez 1994, Truxillo, Bauer and Sanchez 2001), attractiveness of the organisation, and hiring expectations (Ryan and Ployhart 2000, Wasko 2008) are among factors that can influence candidate reaction.

**7.4 Recommendations based on technology and innovation that support recruitment findings.**
Through the review, the majority of policing stakeholders felt that developing a national police e-recruitment platform would attract a number of likely benefits, including:

- realising economies of scale if more forces use a central e-recruitment platform
- opportunities for greater efficiencies, including nationally tracking applicants, managing transfers, managing assessment centre data, monitoring trends, evaluating new initiatives
- improved consistency across forces regarding standards around application, sifting, and branding
- improved candidate
experience

- more efficient data protection compliance as data would be in one place.

As there are clear benefits for developing a national police e-recruitment platform, consideration should be given as to how this can be taken forwards. During the remainder of the 2016/17 reporting year, the College of Policing will consider how a national e-recruitment platform could be taken forwards. This will include scoping requirements of the platform, how it could cope with large national candidate volumes, what IT support is available, how it is compatible with other systems, how customisable it will be and details associated with costs to inform decision making.

**Recommendation 6: Police national e-recruitment platform**

Consideration should be given to developing a national police e-recruitment platform. This could include using different methods of assessment (eg, during sifting and pre-assessment centre), managing assessment centre data, accepting and tracking applicants and linking to central marketing websites for national marketing and attraction campaigns.

To be delivered by: The College of Policing.

Target timeframe: Feasibility analysis reported by March 2017.
Evaluation strategy

8.1 Overview
This report has emphasised the importance of developing interventions based on the best available evidence. As part of an evidence-based practice approach, interventions should be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis.

The gold standard of evaluation in recruitment and selection are predictive validity evaluations whereby measures taken at the selection stage are correlated with measures of subsequent performance in training and/or on the job. It is critical to identify appropriate performance criteria to enable an accurate assessment of validity.

In recent years, research has been designed around randomised controlled trials and research designed around pre- and post-assessment intervention. These research designs are aimed at measuring the effectiveness of an assessment intervention.

As well as designing research studies to measure impact of an intervention, it is appropriate to evaluate the design and delivery of assessment processes against defined industry and professional standards.

8.2 Assessment industry standards
The review identified two key industry standards for selection. These are ISO 10667-1 and ISO 10667-2, and the British Psychological Society Assessment Centre Standards. Both are useful, however, ISO 10667-1 and 2 are international standards which represent the consensus of assessment experts globally and provide a solid basis for adopting best practice.

The standards are for clients and service providers who need to work both sequentially and collaboratively in order to ensure effective delivery of assessment services. ISO 10667-1 includes standards that the client needs to meet and ISO 10667-2 includes standards that the assessment service delivery organisation needs to meet. ISO 10667-2 states:

…the evidence-based, measurable perspective of the assessment service delivery process that has world-wide applicability. It will enable organisations to become more effective users of assessment, making better hiring decisions and enhancing the potential, well-being and employee-organisation fit of all their employees.

ISO 10667-2, 2011.

ISO 10667 is currently being used as an external verification standard for competent assessment delivery practice in the UK. In addition, there are a number best practice guidance documents that have been published (eg, CIPD publications and white papers). A more recent publication

8.3 Defining job performance criterion
To effectively determine whether a selection procedure has the ability to predict on-the-job performance requires a meaningful on-the-job criterion. Often the choice of job performance criteria is decided by convenience (Robertson and Smith 2001). Typically, measures of job performance take one of two forms: counts of output, or other behaviours captured in organisational records or ratings by other people. Organisational records are often incomplete, however, and ratings by others are often unreliable and subjective (idem). The challenge is to define a meaningful work performance criterion that can be assessed reliably, minimising subjectivity.

Stakeholders in the current review indicated the availability of on-the-job training criteria, such as time taken to complete IPLDP or whether an extension was required (eg, officer action-planned early on in their career). There is less evidence, however, of on-the-job work performance criteria. Moving forwards, Assessment and Recognition of Competence (ARC) threshold assessments may prove useful.

However, ARC’s current format is a verification of competence (approximately two years after independent patrol) which provides dichotomous categorical outcome: fully competent or not fully competent. This would not be ideal as a meaningful on-the-job criterion measure as it has a limited range, which may limit the correlation between assessment and performance.

According to CEB research (2013) conducted around on-boarding and organisational growth, it takes between six and ten months for a new hire to reach competence. As such, measures of criterion-related validity should be considered at least 10-12 months after a new hire has been recruited.

On-the-job criterion measures should be identified to support future predictive validity studies and determine the impact of individual selection procedures.

A further form of evaluation of any selection process is to consider cost-benefit analysis. A selection process that is highly valid and designed around current best practice may nevertheless not be appropriate if the per-candidate cost is prohibitive.

8.4 Recommendations for evaluation based on review finding
The College of Policing should coordinate a strategy, applying best practice, to evaluate each of the recommendations outlined in this review. No changes will be made to the national recruitment model before there is clear evidence that those changes will result in assessment that is fit for purpose.

While the new pilot recruitment process should be evaluated over a 12-month period, consideration should be given to setting up a longitudinal study to identify the predictive qualities of the new assessment process on the performance of officers as they progress through their careers.

Establishing an evidence base will require the support of forces either involved in the pilot assessment centre (Recommendation 1) or involvement in other initiatives outlined in this review (eg, attraction and marketing or maximising assessment outcomes).

Establishing an evidence base will require the support of forces either involved in the pilot assessment centre (Recommendation 1) or involvement in other initiatives outlined in this review (eg, attraction and marketing or maximising assessment outcomes).

Further information regarding evaluation strategy can be found in appendix 4.

Recommendation 7: Evaluating changes to process and procedure
Build in an evaluation process to determine if changes to process and procedure reliably identify applicants who are the right people for the rank of police constable, are predictive of on-the-job performance, do not adversely affect underrepresented candidate groups, and meet assessment delivery standards (eg, ISO 10667-1&2). Furthermore, the benefits and drawbacks, including cost benefits, will need to be clearly identified for final approval of an assessment process to be rolled out nationally.

To be delivered by: The College of Policing.
Target timeframe: To have an evaluation conducted by September 2017 (to allow sufficient time for a robust evaluation to take place).
## Technical terminology

### Research and evidence terms

- **Randomised controlled trials** – a type of scientific experiment, where the people being studied are randomly allocated to one of the different treatments under study. Randomised control trials are often considered the gold standard in research.

- **Longitudinal study** – an observational research method in which data is gathered for the same subjects repeatedly over a period of time.

- **Systematic reviews** – a form of literature review that collects and looks at multiple studies to provide an exhaustive summary of current literature relevant to a research question.

- **Meta-analysis** – a statistical procedure that integrates the results of several independent studies considered to be ‘combinable.’ Well-conducted meta-analyses allow a more objective appraisal of the evidence than traditional narrative reviews, provide a more precise estimate of an effect and may explain similarities between the results of individual studies.

### Selection terminology

- **Construct** – when measuring selection outcomes, the personal characteristic to be assessed is called a construct. The construct is a proposed attribute of a person that often cannot be measured directly, but can be assessed using a number of indicators or manifest variables, such as questions on an ability test.

- **Construct validity** – the degree to which a selection procedure measures what it claims, or purports, to be measuring. It is the appropriateness of inferences made on the basis of observations or measurements (often scores), specifically whether a selection procedure measures the intended construct (eg, verbal ability).

- **Criterion validity** – the ability of a selection procedure to predict performance on a second procedure of the same construct, computed as a correlation. If both procedures are administered at approximately the same time, this is described as **concurrent validity**. If the second procedure is taken after the first, the ability is described as **predictive validity**.

- **Face validity** – the extent to which a test is subjectively viewed as covering the concept it purports to measure. It refers to the transparency or relevance of a test as it appears to test participants.

- **Inter-rater reliability** – the inter-rater agreement. It provides a score of how much homogeneity or consensus there is in the ratings given by two or more assessors assessing the same candidate.

- **Predictive validity** – the ability of one selection tool to predict future performance, either in some activity (success in training or on-the-job performance) or on another procedure of the same construct.

- **Political validity** – the extent to which a selection procedure is deemed acceptable by senior or executive personnel, regardless of the technical merits of a selection procedure (eg, its construct validity or reliability).

- **Test-retest reliability** – the degree to which test scores for a group of test takers are consistent over repeated applications of a selection procedure and hence are inferred to be dependable and repeatable for an individual test taker.
# Definition of selection procedures

**Application form** – form completed either online or offline by an applicant, which usually starts the application process.

**Assessment centre** – multiple selection procedures assessing multiple competencies by multiple assessors.

**Biodata** – biographical data which is based on facts about life and work experiences, as well as opinions, values, beliefs, and attitudes that reflect a historical perspective.

**Cognitive ability tests** – a test designed to measure an individual's cognitive function in a specific area, such as verbal reasoning, numeracy or abstract reasoning.

**Educational attainment** – typically measured by length of time that an individual has been in education.

**Job knowledge test** – a test designed to measure specific knowledge, often technical and procedural knowledge, required to effectively perform a job.

**Multiple mini interviews** – an interview format that uses many short independent assessments, typically in a timed circuit, to obtain an aggregate score for each candidate.

**Personality inventories** – questionnaires that attempt to characterise the personality of an individual by objectively scoring replies to a large number of questions concerning his or her own behavioural preferences.

**Integrity testing** – a specific type of personality test designed to assess an applicant's tendency to be honest, trustworthy, and dependable. A lack of integrity is claimed to be associated with counterproductive behaviours.

**Semi-structured interview** – questions are prepared beforehand and new areas for discussion are allowed to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says.

**Situational judgment tests** – predictor method that presents the candidate with a variety of work-related situations and then asks what they would do in each situation.

**Structured interview** – all questions are prepared beforehand, are put in the same order and the same time is given to each interviewee. The process provides precision and reliability required in high-stakes selection.

**Unstructured interview** – questions are not prearranged. The format allows questions to be asked based on the interviewee's responses like a non-threatening conversation.

**Work sample tests** – tests that require applicants to perform tasks or work activities (simulations) that mirror the tasks employees perform on the job.

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## Cohen’s d-value

**Cohen’s d-value:**
- the mean of the majority (or white) group minus the mean of the race-ethnic minority (or black, Asian or minority ethnic) group divided by their pooled standard deviations
- this represents differences in standard deviation units (eg, .50 indicates the groups differ by .50 standard deviation units)
- positive d-values indicate the majority group scores higher
- d-values are standardised and can be compared across selection procedures
- d-values of 0.8 are considered large, 0.5 are considered medium and 0.2 are considered low – although caution needs to be made on other factors such as sample sizes and variance in the sample.

**Note:**
Bobko and Roth (2008) claim that d-values can be considered as an index of ‘adverse impact potential’. They also note, however, that care needs to be taken when reviewing reports of d-value, as researchers often use job incumbents in studies and not external applicants. Therefore, reported estimates of d may be lower (as based on a competent sample) than might be expected for external applicants (including both competent and less competent).
1. **Introduction**

The recommendations of the Review of Police Initial Recruitment are based on the findings of an REA which drew together and synthesised the findings of over 60 journal articles, sifted from an initial pool of over 8,000 potentially relevant studies. The REA sought to systematically find high-quality, robust studies relating to selection and assessment processes that addressed the following themes:

- effective selection
- attraction and marketing
- technology and innovation
- maximising the performance of candidates.

The REA uncovered robust evidence to enable strong conclusions to be drawn for one of the review questions related to effective selection. The best available evidence came from meta-analytical reviews that not only synthesise findings from high-quality studies, but also combine their data to enable a more robust overall conclusion. Nine such reports were found in relation to selection procedures that best predict on-the-job performance. This meant well-evidenced recommendations could be developed for this area. For other research questions, where the evidence base was less robust (eg, strategies that lead to attracting diverse and talented applicants), the REA identified best available evidence.

Where the evidence was stronger, we have made proposals and where the evidence base was less certain, we have put forward recommendations for further research in a policing context.

2. **What is an REA?**

An REA is an approach to gathering and evaluating the best available evidence about a specified question. The methodology applied involves a systematic search of published literature against a set of search terms and within defined search criteria. REAs aim to be rigorous, however they are limited in breadth and depth by a number of aspects of the search, such as date of publication, the number of databases searched, the availability of articles and the time and resources available.
The benefit of using this approach to answering the above questions is that we can, relatively quickly, establish what is already known about the issues and thereby inform any future work in this area.

3. Procedure followed for the review

The following describes in broad terms the steps that were used to carry out the REA led by the College of Policing Selection and Assessment business unit and drawing on College researchers for quality assurance and force recruiters to provide support.

The first step was to design research questions. The questions were designed in consultation with force recruiters, College occupational psychologists, and College researchers. The four research questions were:

- Effective selection: What is effective in assessing people’s suitability for a job/role?
- Attraction and marketing: What marketing methods are effective at attracting talented people to join organisations?
- Technology and innovation: What interventions (eg, technology and innovation) have been shown to be effective in supporting organisational recruitment processes?
- Maximising performance: What interventions have been shown to be effective in allowing candidates to perform to their best ability?

A research team was established with members including force recruiters and College of Policing Selection and Assessment occupational psychologists. The team was familiarised with REA methods, notably through drawing on guidance that had been produced for College of Policing ‘Evidence Base Camp’ sessions.

Experienced occupational psychologists within the team took the lead role for conducting the research for each question. The research team was encouraged to contribute ideas for search terms. Each of the research questions had search terms formulated, tested and refined by the end of January 2016. The search terms formulated for each of the review questions are outlined below.

**Q1. What is effective in assessing people’s suitability for a job/role?**

S1 (assessment principles)
- "Job analysis" OR valid* OR reliable* OR consistency OR fair* OR robust* OR standard* OR "barriers to effective assessment" OR bias*

**AND**

S2 (types of assessment)
- test* OR presentation* OR "work sample exercise"* OR "job simulation test"* OR "in tray exercise"* OR "role play exercise"* OR "group exercise"* OR interview* OR "self-assessment"* OR "job preview"* OR "Online application"* OR "competency based questionnaire"* OR SJT*

**AND**

S3 (assessment context)
- recruitment* OR selection* OR "assessment centre" OR "assessment process"

**NOT**
- Patient OR child* OR smoke* OR drug* OR animal* OR biology

**Databases searched:**
- PsychInfo
- PsycARTICLES
- Proquest

**Limitations:**
- Published date: > 2000 (plus additional articles recommended by SMEs)
- Peer reviewed only
- Academic journals only
- English language only

**Q2. What marketing methods are effective at attracting talented people to join organisations?**

S1 (terms related to marketing interventions)
- market* OR advert* OR campaign* OR brand* OR systematic

**AND**

S2 (terms related to attraction/talent)
- Attract* OR "enhance interest" OR talent

**AND**

S3 (terms related to context)
- recruitment* OR selection* OR assessment* OR workforce* OR employee* OR "new recruits" OR "human capital" OR organisation

**NOT** Animal* OR smoke* OR drug*

**Databases:**
- ProQuest
- PsycINFO
- PsycARTICLES

**Limitations:**
Q3. What interventions (eg, technology and innovation) have been shown to be effective in supporting organisational recruitment processes?

S1 (terms related to context)
SU ( "personnel selection" OR "assessment centres" OR "assessment centre*" OR recruitment OR selection )

AND

S2 (terms related to technology and innovation)
AB ( Technology OR "information technology" OR "new technology" OR Innovation OR "innovation and technology" OR "computer-based" OR "internet-based" OR "web-based" OR video OR simulations OR "serious games" )

AND

S3 (terms related to assessment)
AB ( Testing OR recruitment OR selection OR exam* OR assessment OR Sifting OR screening OR attitudes OR reactions OR preference )

NOT

S4 (terms not related to assessment)
AB ( "natural selection" OR Evolution OR Biology )

Databases:
ProQuest
EBSCOhost

Limitations:
Published date: > 1990
English language only

Q4. Maximising performance: What interventions have been shown to be effective in allowing candidates to perform to their best ability?

S1 candidate OR applicant

AND

S2 Recruitment OR selection OR assessment OR test* OR exam OR interview

AND

S3 improve OR enhance OR increase OR affect OR better OR higher OR effective

AND

S4 perform* OR skill OR ability OR strengths OR potential OR "test score" OR "test performance" OR affirmation

Databases:
ProQuest
PsycINFO

Limitations:
Published date: > 1980
English language only
Next, the team developed the sift criteria which were used to decide, based on the contents of the abstracts, whether to request the full article. The sift criteria included a consideration of relevance and the robustness of the research methods (drawing on the Maryland scale). Below is an overview of the sifting criteria for each review question.

**Question one sift criteria – What is effective in assessing people's suitability for a job/role:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1  Is the study about effective assessment e.g. assessment principles included?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Go to Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2  Is the study about selection/recruitment?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Go to Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3  Is the study an evaluation (at least pre and post, multiple comparison sites) OR a systematic review?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Do not include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question two sift criteria – What marketing methods are effective at attracting talented people to join organisations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1  Is the study about marketing methods for selection OR recruitment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Go to Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2  Is the study focused on either attracting a diverse workforce OR a talented workforce?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Go to Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3  Is the study an evaluation (at least pre and post, multiple comparison sites) OR a systematic review?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Do not include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Include</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Question three sift criteria – What interventions (technology and innovations) have been shown to be effective in supporting organisational recruitment processes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1  Is the study about selection/assessment?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Go to Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2  Is the study about factors allowing candidates to perform to their best ability OR factors which might prevent a candidate group from performing to the best of their ability.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Go to Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3  Is the study at least level 3 on the Maryland scale (before and after – 2 comparison sites) OR a systematic review?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Do not include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question four sift criteria – What interventions have been shown to be effective in allowing candidates to perform to their best ability:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1  Is the study about selection/assessment?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Go to Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2  Is the study about factors allowing candidates to perform to their best ability OR factors which might prevent a candidate group from performing to the best of their ability.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Go to Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3  Is the study at least level 3 on the Maryland scale (before and after – 2 comparison sites) OR a systematic review?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Include</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Do not include</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Include</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Different sifting criteria were used for different questions due to the availability of quality research. For example, both questions one and two had a higher level of research quality than questions three and four. As such, the sift criteria were reduced for questions three and four.

A team of nine people carried out sifting of the abstracts found through the search. The below provides an overview of the output of the sifting process:

As can be seen by the table below, the greatest number of meta-analysis studies/systematic reviews were found for question one. A full list of articles referenced by the review is given in the bibliography in appendix 5. In addition, articles were included in the review that provided useful insights and that were either referenced in the articles sifted or were suggested by subject matter experts. This increased the overall number of articles included to 130+. The full list of articles can be seen in the bibliography in appendix 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question area</th>
<th>No. of abstracts reviewed</th>
<th>No. of abstracts that met sift criteria</th>
<th>No. of articles reviewed</th>
<th>No. of articles that met sift criteria</th>
<th>No. of meta-analysis or systematic reviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Effective selection</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attraction and marketing</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Technology and innovation</td>
<td>2,306</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Maximising performance</td>
<td>2,459</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,116</strong></td>
<td><strong>252</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.

Force engagement

1. Force recruitment needs
Forces and key stakeholders were invited to a Review of Police Initial Recruitment event at Ryton on 8 December 2015. The event was designed to provide an opportunity for delegates to learn about the scope of the review and to share concerns and opportunities. The event was represented by 68 delegates across policing.

Throughout the engagement day, forces were engaged in a variety of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) exercises to identify key themes. Box 5 below provides an overview of concerns and opportunities identified by delegates.

Strengths were perceived as people wanting to become police officers, the national process being robust and defensible and being more cost effective as a national process as opposed to regional or 43 local processes. Weaknesses were perceived as the majority of the recruitment model being best practice and not mandated, observations of inconsistent recruitment practice (pre- and post-national assessment centre), differences in applicant volume and salary across the country and long length of timeline from application to starting.

Opportunities were seen as improving the standardisation of sifting and post-national assessment centre assessments, developing the right standards, getting the right branding and technology and being less risk averse, as this review provides an opportunity to do something radical. Threats were seen as forces moving away from the national standards, exclusionary standards, challenges of workforce diversity, inconsistency of recruitment practice and candidates being attracted to other employers.
## Overall SWOT analysis

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ People want to be a police officer</td>
<td>▪ Majority of recruitment model is best practice and not mandated</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Current process is defensible and delivered consistently across 43 forces</td>
<td>▪ Inconsistent process delivered across 43 forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Robust national process</td>
<td>▪ Recruitment technology is dated</td>
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<td>▪ Cheaper and more efficient as a national process</td>
<td>▪ North/South divide in terms of number of applications and reasonableness of salary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Timeline from application to starting</td>
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<td>▪ Local perspective is diminished</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Standardisation – improve consistency of sifting and post NRAC</td>
<td>▪ Regional influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Develop the right standards</td>
<td>▪ Forces moving away from the national standards and fragmenting</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Get the right branding</td>
<td>▪ Exclusionary standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Get the right technology – online recruitment and social media</td>
<td>▪ Lack of diversity in successful applicants</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Be less risk averse – chance to do something radical</td>
<td>▪ Everyone doing their own things – different interpretations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Candidates being attracted to other employers</td>
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1. **Introduction**
   An evaluation strategy will be developed to support this review's recommendations. The evaluation strategy will be developed by College of Policing Selection and Assessment business unit, in consultation with College researchers.

   The review recommends (Recommendation 7) that an evaluation of changes in process and procedure that fall out of the recommendations is put in place – hence the need for an evaluation strategy.

2. **What is the purpose of the evaluation strategy?**
   The purpose of the evaluation strategy will be to review the impact of initiatives across a number of criteria, such as the impact of an initiative on candidate/applicant performance, evaluation of the equality impact, and the cost-benefit of initiatives.

   No changes will be made to selection procedures or recruitment processes before there is clear evidence that those changes will result in assessments that are effective and fit for purpose.

3. **Proposed evaluation criteria for Recommendation 1**
   Evaluation criteria will be developed for each recommendation. Work associated with Recommendation 1 has commenced at the request of the WCC. Therefore, evaluation criteria associated with Recommendation 1 are more advanced than for the other recommendations due to progress made in this area.
The proposed evaluation criteria for Recommendation 1 are:

- pre- and post-initiative performance data to determine impact
- time commitment for applicants, candidates, assessors, recruiters
- cost/benefit analysis
- equality impact assessment including metrics associated with adverse impact
- exercise-related data (eg, how difficult or easy each of the exercises or components of the exercise are)
- evidence of validity (eg, ability of new assessments to predict on-the-job performance)
- evidence of reliability (eg, consistency of multiple assessors assessments of the same candidate)
- assessment design and delivery meet industry standards (eg, ISO 10667-1&2)
- candidate reaction/experience of initiative (eg, measured through a perception-based survey)
- assessor confidence in their ability to assess effectively (eg, measured through perception-based survey).

The above criteria are presented to provide an indication of criteria. Further evaluation criteria will be developed for this and other recommendations.

For each evaluation area, a series of indicators will be devised against which evidence will be gathered. Subsequently, the evidence will be outlined in a report distributed to key stakeholders (such as WCC and Review of Police Initial Recruitment Working Group).
References

Effective selection


British Psychological Society.


Attraction and marketing


Leiter, M., Gascón, S., Martínez-Jarreta, B. (2009) Value Congruence,


Maximising assessment outcomes


Carless, S. A., Imber, A. (2007) The Influence of Perceived Interviewer and Job and Organizational Characteristics on Applicant Attraction and


**Technology interventions to support recruitment**


Arthur, W Jr., Doverspike, D., Mūnoz, G. J., Taylor, J. E., Carr, A. E. 


Best practice references


Protecting the public
Supporting the fight against crime

As the professional body for policing, the College of Policing sets high professional standards to help forces cut crime and protect the public. We are here to give everyone in policing the tools, skills and knowledge they need to succeed. We will provide practical and common-sense approaches based on evidence of what works.

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