National Police Promotion Framework
Guidance
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This is version 6.1 of the National Police Promotion Framework guidance document. It replaces version 5 of the NPPF Operating Manual dated August 2012.

### NPPF guidance – areas of change

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1. **Introduction**

1.1 This operating guidance outlines the procedures for forces implementing the National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) for promotion of officers to the rank of sergeant and inspector. This version supersedes the operating manuals dated August 2012, July 2015, and other earlier operating manuals.

1.2 Forces are mandated under Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 (as amended) and NPPF to comply with the requirements of the NPPF. In addition, forces implementing the framework must meet the requirements of the NPPF quality assurance system and the national data capture process.

1.3 This operating manual details the mandatory steps of the NPPF. In particular, the operating manual:

- describes the operating procedures for the four steps of the promotion process
- describes the process of applying the four steps to all candidates for sergeant and inspector promotions
- outlines arrangements for further monitoring of the framework
- explains the compulsory data capture requirements for participating forces.

1.4 Compliance with the requirements outlined in this manual, and those outlined above, will satisfy the College of Policing that the NPPF is being applied rigorously, fairly and consistently by all participating forces.

1.5 The NPPF quality assurance process supports consistent implementation of the promotion system for sergeants and inspectors. It does this by striking an appropriate balance between a force's local accountability for promotion to the ranks of sergeant and inspector and the need for a national level of standardisation, fairness and equality across the service.

1.6 Forces operating the NPPF must know and understand their statutory duties in respect of the Equality Act 2010, and in particular the general duty on public authorities to have due regard to:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advancing equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- fostering good relations between people from different groups
- being able to demonstrate how they have shown due regard to the public sector equality duty.
While the College of Policing has published its own equality impact assessment, forces must also give due regard to the equality impact when introducing NPPF in their own force area.

1.7 Women officers and officers from minority ethnic groups are under-represented in supervisory ranks. These officers should be specifically encouraged to apply through positive action initiatives. This is a competitive process and final selection and promotion will be based on merit, with the best officers promoted to the rank of sergeant or inspector in each force. Forces may wish to use further positive action provisions, however, made under the Equality Act 2010.

1.8 In order to adopt the NPPF, forces must complete the registration documentation and engage in the quality assurance system. Access can be obtained via PSQMS.enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk.

1.9 This document also provides guidance for delivering leadership learning and development alongside the NPPF to support candidates in evidencing competency. See chapter 8 for further explanation.

1.10 Contact details for the College of Policing Project Team are provided in section 11.

2. National Police Promotion Framework data capture process

2.1 Complying with the data capture process is a mandatory requirement of the NPPF process. The College of Policing has a software system that records the required data and provides forces with the information they need. This helps forces meet their statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity but does not detract from or replace the statutory obligation placed on them in relation to equality and diversity. It also allows the College to fulfil its obligations to monitor the fairness of the NPPF on a national level.

2.2 Forces must provide the required data for all candidates who apply to and progress through the NPPF. Forces need to verify, clarify and update this candidate data at each stage by the prescribed quarterly dates. This is done using candidate tracking spreadsheets. Forces must therefore put in place a system to provide and validate the mandatory required data.

2.3 Further information on the NPPF and data capture can be obtained from the Data Capture Force Guidance document on the College of Policing website.
2.4 Police Service Quality Assurance scheme
An overview of the quality assurance system is set out below. Full details can be found here and on the College of Policing website.

2.4.1 The NPPF quality assurance system applies to the promotion of sergeants and inspectors. Forces may not run promotion activity for both ranks at the same time, however. The validation process will therefore take this into account by focussing on a force’s first promotion activity. Forces will be expected to explain how they will apply the NPPF to the other rank. For example, they may indicate that exactly the same approach will apply or they may describe any differences. The following is a high-level overview of the NPPF quality assurance system.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Registration</th>
<th>Force registers that it is now promoting officers under the NPPF.</th>
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<td>Validation of implementation</td>
<td>At the same time as a force promotes officers via the NPPF, it addresses the requirements of the NPPF quality assurance system. This must be achieved within the first 12 months of operating the NPPF. 12 months is indicative – actual timing will be dependent on when a force plans to implement Step Three activity for both sergeants and inspectors. Validation in most cases will be by remote desktop analysis. Validation visits will only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances e.g. if one or more major issues have been identified during the desktop analysis. Quality assurance will cover all four steps up to a point when forces register candidates with an awarding body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renewal</td>
<td>After four years the force will be subject to renewal under the NPPF quality assurance system. This will be a light touch approach dealing with exceptional change.</td>
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All forces are required to use the NPPF to promote to the ranks of sergeant and inspector. The NPPF quality assurance system will only become relevant, however, when a force actively promotes using the NPPF.

2.5 Structure of the National Police Promotion Framework
The NPPF consists of four steps, ending in an assessed temporary period of promotion in the rank to which the candidate aspires. At each step it is possible for a candidate to attain, exceed or fall short of the standards required. The four steps of the process are:
Step One: Competence in current rank
Step Two: Legal knowledge examination
Step Three: Assessment against rank-specific competencies and matching to vacancies
Step Four: Temporary promotion and work-based assessment.

It is important that forces present the NPPF as a national continuous process and that officers are expected to progress within the defined timescales. The national aspects of the framework allow for greater interoperability between forces.

2.6 Candidates are eligible for promotion for as long as they have time left in their NPPF Step Two validity period. The validity period is five years, commencing the date they took the legal knowledge exam at NPPF Step Two. During this period, candidates must be selected at Step Three as being suitable for temporary promotion within the next 12 months. If the candidate has not been successfully selected at Step Three before the end of the validity period, they must return to Step One and, if deemed suitable, retake the legal examination at Step Two.

2.7 The four steps are continuous within the promotion process and candidates must undertake each step with the intention of completing the whole process as soon as possible. This is to allow candidates to make best use of the skills they develop as they progress through the four steps, allow forces to control the promotion process and to promote the right number of officers to meet the needs of the force. Provision will be made, however, for circumstances such as where an officer takes maternity or paternity support leave, adoption or adoption support leave, disability related leave, a career break for the purposes of care, workforce planning requirements, availability of vacancies and reasonable adjustments for disabled officers. This list is not exhaustive and each case must be considered by the forces on its merits.

2.8 Where an officer takes maternity leave, paternity leave, maternity related sickness, adoption leave, or a career break for the purposes of care, the time taken shall not count towards a reduction of the relevant NPPF Step Two legal knowledge examination validity period. For example, where an officer has three years remaining in the NPPF Step Two legal knowledge examination validity period and takes maternity leave for one year, the remaining validity upon return to work will be three years.

Further information on the NPPF Step Two validity period can be found on the College of Policing website Rules and Syllabus page.
3. Step One: Competence in current rank

Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this step is to ensure that candidates are suitable to enter the promotion process. This means establishing that the candidate is competent in their current rank, rather than assessing potential for temporary promotion to another rank.

Procedure

3.2 It should be made clear to all prospective candidates at the very start of the promotion process that promotion opportunities are very likely to be limited and that promotion can be a highly competitive process. Not all candidates will ultimately succeed in gaining a promotion to the rank to which they aspire. Forces must ensure that all candidates have a realistic understanding of what is required of them, and of the opportunity for promotion, throughout the four steps of the process.

3.2.1 While not part of the eligibility criteria or assessment of competence in the current rank (Step One), there is evidence that force-level briefings to potential candidates are of value in allowing officers to properly reflect on the timing of their application and likely prospects of success. Briefings aimed at officers who have made repeated unsuccessful attempts for promotion are of equal value. Such briefings have been shown to manage expectations of officers, reduce the number of applicants, which then minimises abstraction and force costs. The primary aim of such briefings are to provide officers with information. They must not be used to dissuade officers from applying.

3.3 Candidates must first complete the NPPF Candidate Registration Form, obtainable via the Force examinations officer (FEO). The FEO will also send to the relevant line manager a locally designed Line Manager Endorsement Form. The national Candidate Registration Form must be completed and returned to the appropriate person in the force before the candidate discusses with their line manager their request to commence the promotion process. This is to ensure that all candidates who express an interest in promotion are captured. A candidate's biographical data must be treated confidentially between the candidate and the force. It must not be shared with the line manager or other persons.

3.4 The line manager and basic command unit/operational command unit (BCU/OCU) commander/head of department (or nominated delegate) will complete the separate Line Manager Endorsement Form to state whether or not the candidate is endorsed to progress to Step Two of the NPPF (see 3.7 below). The line manager must then meet with the candidate to explain whether they have been endorsed or not and discuss the candidate's promotion aspirations with them.
3.5 All Candidate Registration Forms, whether they have been endorsed or not, must then be sent to the College of Policing Selection and Assessment department. Forms are then entered into the system and all new candidates (endorsed or not) are allocated a unique identification number with which to begin their audit trail through the process. The completed line manager endorsement form is retained in-force.

3.5.1 Candidates on the Fast Track constable to inspector process are, by virtue of being accepted onto that programme, deemed to meet the eligibility criteria. They must, however, still register with the College of Policing Selection and Assessment department using the same form as officers applying at Step One.

3.6 Candidates who are successful at Step One will automatically be entered for Step Two (NPPF Step Two legal knowledge examination).

3.7 **Eligibility criteria**

Step One confirms that candidates have:

- completed the probation period in their current rank
- demonstrated competence in that rank through their performance and development review (PDR), or Student Officer Learning and Assessment Portfolio (SOLAP)/acceptable equivalent
- no live written improvement notices issued under the Police (Performance) Regulations 2012 or reduction in rank under those procedures in the previous 18 months
- no live written warning, final written warning or extended final written warning issued under the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 (a finding of misconduct but where no separate penalty is applied – regulation 35(1)(b) – does not debar an officer from proceeding to Step Two)
- adhered to the attendance management policy, taking full account of the Police Advisory Board guidance on attendance management.

3.8 **Officers who have previously been reduced in rank**

Where a substantive sergeant or inspector is subsequently reduced in rank, they may, after any period of disqualification, reapply for promotion. In such cases, officers will commence the process at NPPF Step One but will not be required to undertake Step Two.

If selected at Step Three, they will follow the promotion process under which they were originally successful.

- Officers who were originally substantively promoted under the OSPRE process will again be substantively promoted and subject to a 12-month probationary period (sergeants only). A chief officer may determine that, in order to refresh their knowledge and skills, officers should undertake the work-based assessment as part of a development programme.
As the National Occupational Standards are constantly reviewed, it is strongly advised that officers engage with the process to ensure their skills and knowledge equip them for the role.

- Officers who were originally promoted through NPPF will again be temporarily promoted and retake any new or revised units within the work-based assessment. This is to allow for knowledge and skills to be assessed against any changes in the underpinning National Occupational Standards. Candidates will, however, be assessed on performance over the mandatory 12 months period.

- Where no significant changes to the National Occupational Standards have been recorded, the chief officer may make a determination to substantively promote an officer based only on performance evidence over the mandatory 12-month period.

3.8.1 Officers subject to criminal or misconduct investigations

Officers may be the subject of criminal or misconduct investigations as they progress through the promotion process. In such cases, forces must examine the particular circumstances of the investigation and decide if the officer should be removed from the promotion process or if it is possible for them to proceed.

3.8.2 Where an officer is removed from the promotion process, the officer may appeal this decision (but not the issues relevant to the investigation). The appeal must be heard by an independent party to the investigation and be limited to the issues relevant to continuance in the promotion process. Where the decision is not appealed or the appeal is refused, the officer will be withdrawn from the NPPF. The FEO must inform the College of Policing Selection and Assessment department that the officer has been removed from the promotion process, but the surrounding circumstances are confidential and must not be disclosed.

3.8.3 Where an officer remains in the promotion process, they must also be informed whether or not they will be allowed to proceed to the next step while the investigation is live. Such decisions are also subject to an appeal. The various validity periods or time limits built into the NPPF process will continue to run down, irrespective of whether an officer is permitted to proceed to the next step or not.

3.8.4 Forces and professional standards units must consider the impact on an officer’s promotion status before an officer is moved to a non-public facing or non-operational role. Allowing an officer to remain in the promotion process but in a role where they are unable to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the current or next step of the process would be unfair and should be avoided.

3.8.5 Where an officer is allowed to proceed to or remain in Step Four, a decision to substantively promote an officer at the end of the 12 months may be deferred if, at that time, the misconduct or investigation is not yet
complete. In some cases, officers may be proven to be in misconduct or found guilty of an offence but will have successfully completed the work-based assessment. Such officers would not be substantively promoted as they are unlikely to meet the satisfactory performance criteria as discussed in chapter 6.8 below. Where the officer has successfully attained the assessment units, however, the external qualification may still be awarded.

3.8.6 Where, following an investigation or misconduct hearing, an officer is completely exonerated, an application can be made to the College of Policing to extend the validity period at Step Two so that the officer is not disadvantaged. In general terms, where the candidate is supported by their force, the College will look to add to the validity period any time (in days) where the officer was suspended from duty or placed in a role where they were unable to access the next part of the promotion process.

3.8.7 Where a finding is imposed such as a written warning (which carries a 12-month prohibition at Step One), the officer may, subject to the agreement of the chief officer, be retained in the promotion process, providing they also have sufficient validity period remaining to allow them to undertake the next step. The validity period would not generally be extended in such cases unless there were additional factors, such as serious illness, to be considered. In such cases, application to extend the relevant time period may, subject to the support of the chief officer, be made to the College of Policing.

3.9 Assessment in the PDR
Competence in the current rank should be demonstrated through a satisfactory rating (or equivalent grade) in the applicant’s current PDR or force appraisal process. The PDR process in each force must accord with the standards in the College of Policing PDR guidance. Competence in the current rank must be assessed using the national standards for assessment in policing against the relevant professional skills set outlined for constables or sergeants in the Policing Professional Framework (PPF) or its equivalent. If a candidate does not have a current PDR, the line manager may refer back to the last PDR. Where evidence is dated, however, the line manager should conduct an interim assessment and record this in the candidate's PDR. The onus is on the force to ensure that PDRs or their equivalent, are completed.

3.10 The PPF skills descriptors provide minimum national criteria to assess competence, but chief officers have the discretion to set additional local criteria which they consider relevant to local policing needs. The PPF is not mandatory but is the preferred competency framework. Where a force uses an alternative framework to the PPF, it must be mapped across to the standards in the PPF, be used by all relevant staff in that force and be able to assess an individual against a set of competencies relevant to their current rank.
3.11 Candidates deemed to lack competence against the criteria at 3.1 above for promotion at Step One may make a fresh application if they are able to provide further evidence of competence. If there is no immediate new evidence, the candidate must be given a development plan agreed with their manager and then reapply in line with that plan. This development plan must be a part of the candidate’s PDR/SOLAP or equivalent. If an applicant is unsuccessful at Step One, the reasons should be recorded and detailed in the candidate’s PDR.

3.12 Admission to Step Two (legal knowledge examination) for promotion to the rank of sergeant is restricted to constables who, by the date of the legal examination, have:

- completed two years’ service
- been confirmed in their appointment
- not previously obtained a pass to the rank of sergeant in a recognised police promotion examination.

A pass mark refers to completing the full promotion process, i.e., OSPRE I and II or Steps One to Four of NPPF. It does not refer to candidates who have taken the legal knowledge exam only but whose validity period has expired.

Candidates nearing completion of their probation may apply for promotion at Step One if they expect to achieve substantive rank by the date of Step Two (legal knowledge examination).

The exception is constables participating in the High Potential Development scheme (HPDS), who may take Step Two (legal knowledge examination) the next time it is delivered but must still register at Step One within the specified time frames. HPDS officers are subject to specific provisions made by the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996. Officers and forces should refer to the regulations and HPDS policy for further information.

The same provisions apply to officers who are accepted onto the constable to inspector Fast Track process. The only variation is that constables will apply for the next Step Two (legal knowledge exam) process for inspector. Fast Track officers are also subject to the provisions made by the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996. Officers should refer to the regulations and Fast Track policy for further information. See chapter 11.
3.17 Admission to Step Two (legal knowledge examination) for promotion to the rank of inspector is currently restricted to sergeants who by the date of the Step Two legal knowledge examination have:

- attained the rank of sergeant, otherwise than on temporary promotion
- not previously obtained a pass to the rank of inspector in a recognised police promotion examination.

3.18 Sergeants must be of substantive rank before undertaking Step Two (legal knowledge examination) for the rank of inspector. They can, however, apply for promotion to the rank of inspector (Step One of the NPPF) when nearing the completion of temporary promotion to sergeant (Step Four) if they expect to achieve substantive rank of sergeant by the date of the inspectors’ Step Two legal knowledge examination.

In a minority of cases some sergeants could complete the inspector promotion process but not yet have attained the two years’ service in the substantive rank of sergeant as required under regulation 3, Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996. In such cases, officers cannot be promoted until such time as they do meet service length criteria.

3.19 There is no exception for sergeants participating in HPDS or Fast track process. HPDS and Fast Track officers are subject to specific provisions made by the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 as amended. Officers and forces should refer to the regulations and HPDS/Fast Track policy for further information.

3.20 Monitoring and reporting

The quality assurance system requires forces to provide the College of Policing with the completed Candidate Registration Forms of both supported and unsupported candidates at Step One during the submission periods specified in the data capture force guidance.

4. Step Two: Legal knowledge examination

Purpose

4.1 The purpose of this step is to ensure candidates have the appropriate legal knowledge relevant to the rank of sergeant or inspector.

Procedure

4.2 Step Two is the legal knowledge examination. It is a national paper-based multiple-choice question examination. The syllabus is the same for all candidates.
4.3 The NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) pass is valid for five years from the date of taking the examination. A candidate must be within this validity period to be selected for promotion at the NPPF Step Three (local selection process).

4.4 It is important to note that the final date of the candidate's NPPF Step Three assessment (for example, the date of their final Step Three interview) must fall within this five-year period. If a candidate has not completed the NPPF Step Three within five years from the date of taking the NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination), they must return to NPPF Step One.

4.5 In planning the date of a NPPF Step Three local selection process, forces must take into consideration the five-year validity anniversary date. A Step Three process that straddles this anniversary date is likely to seriously disadvantage candidates in the fifth year of their validity period. Where a candidate is selected at Step Three but selection date falls outside of the validity period, the officer will not be allowed to proceed to NPPF Step 4 (work-based assessment).

4.6 Candidates in the final year of their NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge exam) validity period may choose to re-enter the NPPF Step Two examination which falls on the final anniversary of their previous attempt. This provision comes at the expense of any remaining validity period of the previous pass between the closing date for entries to NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) and the examination date.

4.7 Candidates may decide to retain the remainder of their NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) pass in anticipation of a NPPF Step Three process being announced and held between the closing date for entries to NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) and the next examination date. These candidates may not re-enter the NPPF Step Two until the following year.

4.9 **Criteria**

The pass requirement in the sergeants' and inspectors' NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) is an absolute standard (set pass mark). Those candidates who achieve a score equal to or above the set pass mark will be awarded a pass. Further details in relation to the pass mark will be communicated in the Instructions to Candidates document, which all candidates receive prior to the examination.

4.10 Candidates who are unsuccessful in the NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) will return to NPPF Step One. Unsuccessful candidates must be given a development plan after discussion with their line manager.

4.11 Chief officers of candidates attaining the exceptional scores will be notified via the FEO.
4.12 Monitoring and reporting
The examination process at NPPF Step Two is designed, delivered, administered and quality assured by College of Policing. The College Selection and Assessment department monitors Step Two and provides forces with the results. This includes performance analysis of successful and unsuccessful candidates, using the data capture information outlined in the NPPF Quality Assurance Guidance document.

4.13 The Candidate Registration Form required at Step One must be received by the College of Policing by the Step Two closing dates published in the annual Rules and Syllabus document.

5. Step Three: Assessment against rank-specific competencies and matching to vacancies

Purpose
5.1 The purpose of this step is to:

■ assess candidates’ potential to perform at the next rank against the relevant behavioural competencies
■ provide a robust and fair mechanism to broadly match the number of successful candidates to the number of expected vacancies – forces must take account of the NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) five-year expiry period when considering their succession planning needs.

Procedure
5.2 It is the responsibility of the force’s senior management, in conjunction with human resources specialists, to decide on the structure and techniques used in Step Three in order to select the appropriate candidates to the rank aspired to. It is also the responsibility of the force to ensure they are able to demonstrate how they have shown due regard to the public sector equality duty in deciding which procedures to use. Forces are encouraged to use positive action to encourage applications from officers with protected characteristics that are under-represented in supervisory ranks.

5.3 The NPPF-Equality-Impact-Assessment is published on the College of Policing website and will assist forces in identifying the most relevant issues.

5.4 Forces must advertise at an early stage the method chosen to test candidates at Step Three and the National Occupational Standards used at Step Four. This is to give candidates the opportunity to prepare for the process. Forces must set out the competencies they are testing and
any other requirements of candidates. Candidates must be told about any changes to the advertised process as soon as possible. Advising candidates of the projected number of vacancies at a rank, and the potential numbers of candidates seeking promotion should be seen as good practice prior to the start of a Step Three process.

5.5 **Unsuitable for promotion at this stage**
A candidate who is unsuccessful at Step Three can remain within the NPPF and retake Step Three as long as their Step Two pass remains valid. The candidate should be given feedback and offered support and development with a view to successfully reapplying at Step Three (subject to the validity period criteria). If the candidate can present new evidence of competence, they may retake Step Three based on this development.

5.6 In all cases, candidates must be given the opportunity to develop through an action plan agreed with their line manager and then to retake Step Three, as long as their Step Two pass remains valid. This development plan forms part of the candidate’s PDR and must set out milestones so that the candidate knows when they have reached the appropriate point to retake Step Three.

5.7 **Suitable for promotion**
As vacancies occur, candidates selected for promotion will be posted on a temporary basis for a minimum of 12 months as part of an organisational succession plan. This posting will take into account factors such as specialist skills, need for further skills-based training, recent completion of probation and geographic location. If there are no immediate vacancies, individuals will be placed in a pool of candidates to await placement when a suitable vacancy arises. In the majority of cases, forces should aim not to place a candidate in such a pool for longer than 12 months.

5.8 In exceptional cases it may not be possible to place a pooled candidate within 12 months. Forces should make every effort to place the individual within an additional maximum of 24 months. If no suitable vacancy is found within this extended period, (maximum of 36 months in total), the candidate must re-apply at Step Three. Not many candidates will need to remain in the pool for the maximum period allowed. It can be difficult to find opportunities for officers who may have protected characteristics (such as those on restricted duties or those with caring responsibilities) that allow assessment in the workplace. In these sorts of circumstance, a candidate may have to remain in the pool beyond 12 months. The onus is on forces, however, to ensure that measures are built into their posting policy to ensure that individuals are not indirectly discriminated against due to lack of any opportunity.
5.9 In considering whether or not to extend a candidate’s 12-month pool period, forces must distinguish between candidates who have not previously been offered temporary promotion at Step Four and those who have but declined the posting due to personal preference. Where relevant, forces must consider the reason for that personal choice, taking account of all the circumstances, including any impact or potential impact on equality. In some cases it may be more appropriate for the candidate to return to Step Three than to extend their time in the pool. Forces must treat each case on its individual merits.

5.10 Forces must ensure that the management of candidates in the promotion pool is consistent and fair. The additional 24 pooled months is not a default position, but is available for partial or full use only in exceptional circumstances. It is for forces to decide what constitutes an exceptional circumstance. It is not to be used as an alternative to effective workforce planning, which should include matching numbers selected to projected vacancies.

5.11 **Criteria**
Candidates will be assessed against criteria relevant to the rank aspired to and any standards set by the force. The promotion process selected by the force and any local standards must be monitored by the force to ensure fairness and equality of opportunity, and be of a type and standard consistent with the quality assurance process. The criteria chosen must be:

- applied fairly and consistently across all candidates
- related to the rank aspired to for selection.

5.12 **Monitoring and reporting**
Forces must monitor the processes at Step Three and provide the College of Policing with the results of successful and unsuccessful candidates on a quarterly basis using the candidate tracking spreadsheets, as set out in the NPPF data capture force guidance.

6. **Step Four: Temporary promotion and work-based assessment**

6.1 The NPPF includes a period of workplace assessment of candidates temporarily promoted to and undertaking the duties of sergeant or inspector.
6.2 **Purpose**
The purpose of this step is to:

- provide candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate competence in the rank to which they aspire
- assess existing candidates against the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) assessment units with a view to their achieving substantive promotion at the end of the 12-month assessment (the RQF units are based on the current National Occupational Standards).

6.3 Candidates who are selected at NPPF Step Three must be registered with an external awarding body for the accreditation and certification of the relevant RQF units, before or immediately after being temporarily promoted at NPPF Step Four. The expectation is that candidates will achieve certification by the end of the 12-month period. The standard of assessment for those candidates must comply with that specified in the assessment units. The qualifications will be managed in line with the governance processes for all national policing qualifications set out in *The Strategic Governance of National Policing Qualifications in England and Wales 2015*.

6.3.1 Most roles undertaken by a sergeant or inspector are suitable for assessment against the National Occupational Standards. There are some limited exceptions, such as staff officer or undercover officers, which would make attaining the NOS difficult as they generally do not manage a team. Additionally, officers in defined specialist roles such as custody officer or intelligence may require additional support by way of short-term placements in other work areas to gain the required skills and experience.

6.3.2 The required occupational knowledge of competence of assessors is defined in the programme specification and is aligned to the College of Policing Standards for Police Training Roles. Assessors must be trained to assess against national standards or be working towards completing such training. There is however, no requirement for them to be formally qualified.

6.4 **Procedure**
Step Four is a mandatory 12-month period of temporary promotion, during which candidates are assessed in the workplace against selected Qualification and Credit Framework units for the new rank and the PPF or equivalent. **Candidates need to pass both the academic assessment and evidence satisfactory performance in the rank before they can be substantively promoted.** While the assessment units may be undertaken and passed in a shorter period, the performance at the temporary rank will be over a minimum 12-month period. Successfully completing the work-based assessment should, however, lead to substantive promotion after 12 months. In extenuating circumstances, temporary promotion can be extended for up to a maximum of a further 12 months (see chapter 9).
6.5 A candidate who fails to achieve a satisfactory assessment in all the assessment standards and/or satisfactory performance at the temporary rank during the assessment period (including any extension) must return to NPPF Step Three. The candidate must wait for 12 months from the date they revert to their substantive rank before they can make a further attempt at Step Three. They must be supported with a development plan during this period. Any units that have been completed while a candidate is active at Step Four should be awarded to the candidate.

6.6 The exception to this rule is if a candidate leaves Step Four on a temporary basis due to ill health or voluntarily for other welfare reasons (see 9.12) which results in the 12-month period being suspended. Candidates who voluntarily withdraw from Step Four without such reasons, and as a result fail to achieve the required standards, must wait for 12 months from the date they revert to their substantive rank before they can make a further attempt at Step Three.

6.7 **Criteria**

Candidates will be assessed against the relevant RQF units. Candidates will be assessed in line with the governance processes for all national policing qualifications set out in The Strategic Governance of National Policing Qualifications in England and Wales 2015. Assessors are responsible for ensuring that candidates understand the methods by which they are being assessed.

Candidates will also be assessed within their current PDR on their performance in the temporary rank over the mandated 12-month period. The assessment must be completed within the structure of national assessment protocol for PDR. The PDR assessment should be conducted by the candidate’s line manager or other trained individual appointed by the force.

6.8 **Substantive promotion**

When a candidate has successfully completed the 12-month period of temporary promotion and work-based assessment, they must be considered for promotion to the substantive rank. At this point, forces must also take into consideration the candidate’s:

- length of service in the previous rank that is required by Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 – usually two years’ service
- overall performance (as recorded in the candidate’s PDR)
- attendance management record
- conduct record (as described at 3.1)
- recommendation from the candidate’s BCU/OCU commander/head of department (or nominated delegate).

The result of the assessment should be noted on the candidate’s PDR.
6.9 If a candidate who has successfully completed the period of temporary promotion and the work-based assessment is not given substantive promotion, the reasons for this decision must be evidence-based, justifiable and documented. The process must be fair, consistent and capable of withstanding third-party scrutiny.

6.10 **Temporary promotion outside of NPPF**

The NPPF does not prevent a chief officer from temporarily promoting any officer to fill a vacancy within the force. However, with the introduction of the NPPF the following considerations also apply:

- Where a temporary vacancy will last for 12 months or more and the role is suitable for assessment against the National Occupational Standards, an officer selected at Step Three (OSPRE I and II or NPPF Step Two-qualified) should be placed in the role.

- Officers who have previously passed OSPRE I and II and then been selected for promotion at NPPF Step Three should be substantively promoted at that time. It is a decision for chief officers as to whether these officers undertake the Step Four work-based assessment as part of the probationary period (sergeants) or development period (inspectors).

- Where a temporary vacancy is likely to last for less than 12 months or the role is not suitable for assessment against the National Occupational standards, an officer who is OSPRE I and II qualified should be placed within the role.

- Evidence of performance or skills gained while temporarily promoted can only be transferred to a Step Four process if the evidence is relevant, current and can be verified by the awarding body. It is a decision for the awarding body as to whether such evidence will be accepted.

- Constables and sergeants who are NPPF Step Two-qualified only may be given opportunities to act up in the next rank. They cannot, however, be temporarily promoted to that rank from an acting role without first having been selected at Step Three.

6.11 **Use of body-worn video**

The use of technology to capture evidence relevant to the assessment units is strongly encouraged. This also includes the use of body-worn video (BWV), providing its capture, handling and disposal complies with national policy on BWV and the legislative requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA).

6.11.1 Data captured by use of BWV is personal data and its processing must be compliant with the principles of the DPA and be monitored by the data controller. If challenged, forces must be in a position to show that that this is being done.
6.11.2 Forces must ensure that safeguards are in place to ensure that a recording was in response to a pressing need (e.g., obtaining evidence) rather than personal data being processed just to support the promotion process. Where the recording can be used for both, then, provided that it does not breach other data principles (e.g., excessive retention, fair processing/transparency), the evidence can be used.

6.11.3 Policies or force guidance must be in place to ensure that, where footage is used as evidence of performance, only relevant extracts are used. They must also take into account whether audio is required and whether separate storage, access controls or other security measures are required.

6.11.4 BWV should not be used where alternative assessment methods would equally be effective or alternative technical options are available. For example, BWV should not be used to record a team briefing where an assessor could attend in person or the candidate openly uses a camera to record the briefing. Officers participating understand the reason for the recording. Officers and staff cannot be compelled to participate in such recordings.
7. National Police Promotion Framework - Process Flowchart

**STEP 1**
Application to Line Manager/BCU/OCU Commander/Head of Unit

- Does the officer meet the requirements?
  - **NO**
    - Development plan
  - **YES**

**STEP 2**
- Application for NPPF Legal Knowledge Exam

  - Sit NPPF legal Exam
    - **Unsuccessful**
      - Part 1 no longer valid
    - **Successful**
      - Part 1 still valid

**STEP 3**
- In-force selection

  - **Unsuccessful**
    - Development plan dependent on amount of NPPF Step Two validity remaining
  - **Successful**
    - Allocation from pool to vacancy with 12 months

**STEP 4**
- Temporarily promoted into new rank for 12 months

  - Assessment against Standards/Units
    - **Not yet competent**
    - Achievement standards and approved by force
      - Substantive Promotion
8. Leadership learning and development and the National Police Promotion Framework

8.1 Forces should consider how best to incorporate leadership learning and development into the NPPF as a way of providing candidates with underpinning knowledge.

8.2 While it is open to forces to decide how and when they incorporate leadership programmes into the framework, candidates should start at an early stage so that work-based knowledge can be integrated with later work-based assessment when this is undertaken.

8.3 One way of doing this is through the Core Leadership Programme (CLP), which is mapped to relevant National Occupational Standards. (Information on the CLP is accessible via the NCALT-managed learning environment). This is not a mandated requirement for promotion candidates, but is strongly recommended. Incorporating CLP or an equivalent into the National Police Promotion Framework could:

- better equip newly promoted candidates for their role by developing their leadership and management skills
- develop the careers of candidates through achieving nationally recognised qualifications.

8.4 In some of the original trial forces, candidates were given acting up opportunities and participation in the CLP prior to applying for a promotion place at NPPF Step Three. Candidates who progressed to Step Four found that the CLP gave them the necessary knowledge to undertake the relevant leadership and management units. Those candidates who did not gain a place at Step Four had still significantly developed their professional knowledge and abilities.

9. Guidance on extenuating circumstances and appeals procedures

9.1 Notes on reasonable adjustment, specifically around Step Two, are included in the Rules and Syllabus. If reasonable adjustments are required during any part of the NPPF, candidates must inform the force (and for NPPF Step Two only, the College of Policing) in good time so that adjustments can be made at each of the four steps.

9.2 The College of Policing has an overall responsibility to manage the NPPF and does not, except as at 9.9 below, have a remit to deal with appeals at an individual level. The College will look at any appeal that infers a
force has not complied with policy or quality assurance requirements. In such circumstances, the College may advise forces on policy but will not become involved in the appeals process.

9.3 Additionally, the College of Policing has no remit to review or overturn a decision by a chief officer in selecting an officer at any of the relevant steps in NPPF or comment on the quality of evidence submitted in support of an officer’s application or work-based assessment modules.

9.4 Candidates may appeal within their force appeals process a decision relevant to Step One, Three or in part, Step Four of the promotion process. The College of Policing has an extenuating circumstances policy for Step Two, the process for which is set out in the Rules and Syllabus document. There may also be extenuating circumstances affecting the candidate’s ability to successfully complete certain steps. Extenuating circumstances could be a serious event or series of events, such as death or serious illness of a family member, illness, accident or serious injury to the candidate. Circumstances could be work or home-related. Each case should be assessed on its individual merits.

9.5 Forces must have an appeals procedure at each step for unsuccessful candidates who wish to appeal against the decision. This is in addition to any in-force fairness at work or grievance procedure. This appeals procedure must be delivered centrally in the force and be independent of the candidate’s line management to ensure impartiality and create confidence in the process. Staff associations and diversity staff support associations should be involved in designing, managing and implementing the appeals procedure but should not be asked to adjudicate on an appeal.

9.6 Rather than relying on an appeals process, forces should encourage candidates to make them aware of any extenuating circumstances as soon as practicable and preferably in advance of an assessment taking place. There is a set procedure to follow, however, where a candidate appeals or there are extenuating circumstances:

9.7 Step One: Suitability
Candidates should be referred to the in-force appeals procedure if they have reason to believe that they met the relevant criteria at Step One but have not been successful at that step.

9.8 Candidates who have reason to believe that they met the relevant criteria at Step One, but have not been successful due to extenuating circumstances, should also be referred to the in-force appeals procedure. Fairness at work and grievance procedures may also be considered.

9.9 Step Two: Legal knowledge examination
Where candidates feel their performance at Step Two has been adversely affected by procedural flaws or extenuating circumstances, they should
refer to the Rules and Syllabus document for guidance on reporting to the College of Policing Reports and Disqualifications Panel.

A lack of preparation and/or a heavy workload before taking Step Two (legal knowledge examination) does not count as extenuating circumstances.

9.10 If a candidate is aware of extenuating circumstances before or on the day of the examination, they should decide whether to sign the declaration notice and attempt Step Two (legal knowledge examination) or not attend/undertake the examination.

9.11 Step Three: Assessment against rank-specific competencies and matching to vacancies

The in-force appeals procedure should apply to appeals at Step Three. Fairness at work/grievance procedures may also be considered.

9.12 Step Four: Temporary promotion and work-based assessment

Forces must apply the in-force appeals procedure at this step. Fairness at work and/or grievance procedures may also be invoked for both the assessment of units and assessment performance. The force’s appeals procedure must adhere to the requirements of the relevant awarding body for assessing, accrediting and certifying RQF units.

If the in-force appeals procedure on NPPF Step Four is exhausted and the candidate wishes to take their appeal on how the units were assessed only, the matter may be reported to the awarding body for consideration.

Where an appeal is based on a decision arising from the assessment of performance, the force appeals process must be used.

9.13 In exceptional circumstances, e.g. interruption to Step Four, the following questions may be considered:

- Was the candidate aware of the likelihood of interruption to the period of temporary promotion at the time they applied for selection at Step Three?
- Has the candidate worked consistently and been assessed appropriately throughout the 12-month period to gather evidence for the RQF units, or has this been left to the last opportunity?
- Does any legislation cover the type of interruption to their temporary promotion, e.g. employment law or equality legislation?

9.14 Extending the length of work-based assessment

It is not appropriate to routinely extend a temporary promotion for a further 12 months. In some cases a shorter period (e.g. a further two months) is more appropriate. Each case needs to be considered individually.
9.15  The 12-month period will not be extended due to operational commitments. Police officers deal with operational commitments as part of their daily routine and the Qualification and Credit Framework units have been selected with this in mind.

9.16  The decision to extend a candidate's period of work-based assessment beyond 12 months must be evidence-based, justifiable and documented. When considering an extension, forces should take into account any extenuating circumstances (see 9.2 and 9.4), the assessor’s judgement and the line manager’s recommendation. Forces should establish a central decision-making panel to consider such applications on their behalf.

9.16.1  Where a panel with similar review and appeals functions already exists, providing the decision-making process is transparent, fair and consistent, that panel could be asked to review appeals from the NPPF. There is no requirement for forces to set up an appeals process if a suitable model is already in existence.

9.17  If during Step Four it appears that a candidate may not reach the required standard, they must be informed of the reasons and an action plan put in place. Candidates and forces must take into consideration the time limit for completing work-based assessment, which is an absolute maximum of 24 months.

9.18  If the candidate still does not succeed in reaching the appropriate standard, they must be removed from Step Four, informed of the reasons for removal and supported by a development action plan. The candidate must wait for 12 months from the date they revert to their substantive rank before they can make a further attempt at Step Three. They must still be within the validity period at Step Two to be eligible to retake Step Three. Candidates who do not have sufficient validity period remaining must be referred to Step One.

9.19  **Part-time candidates in step four**

Part-time officers seeking promotion to the rank of sergeant or inspector must complete the required Qualification and Credit Framework units. The period of time allocated to achieve the standards or units should be offered on a pro-rata basis. For example, someone who works exactly 50% of full-time hours would have exactly 24 months in which to complete accreditation and achievement of the Qualification and Credit Framework units or NVQ units). However, part-time candidates may be substantively promoted once they have completed 12 calendar months of temporary promotion, providing they have demonstrated the required competence and achieved all of the required standards or units. Any extension to the temporary promotion must also be granted on a pro-rata basis commensurate with the part-time hours worked.
9.20 **Career management**
NPPF Steps Three and Four are managed in-force and candidates should follow their own force’s procedures.

9.21 An officer may, if they wish, take NPPF Step Two during pregnancy, after an individual risk assessment by their own force. Forces must comply with the section of the Rules and Syllabus document dealing with pregnant officers.

9.22 **Reasonable adjustment**
The Equality Act 2010 allows for a reasonable adjustment to be made where disability, temporary or permanent is present. In the majority of cases, reasonable adjustment will be sought and, where appropriate, made at NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge exam). A reasonable adjustment can be made at any of the steps of the NPPF, however.

9.23 Any candidate may apply for reasonable adjustment. Forces are responsible for reviewing a request for adjustment at Step One, Three and Four in line with force policy. The College of Policing will review any application for reasonable adjustment at Step Two. The procedure for this is outlined in the NPPF Rules and Syllabus and Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

10. **High Potential Development scheme and Fast Track entry scheme**

10.1 Candidates on the HPDS must go through all steps of the NPPF, with the exception of Step Three. On completing Step Two, HPDS candidates deemed ready for promotion to sergeant or inspector must be prioritised where a suitable promotion vacancy arises.

10.2 An HPDS candidate can submit a Promotion Assessment Form at any stage when they feel ready, but can only proceed once they are successful at Step Two (legal knowledge examination). In effect, this process replaces Step Three for HPDS candidates. The line manager can recommend promotion based on this evidence and their own knowledge of the individual. If agreed by the chief officer or nominee in-force, the candidate can be temporarily promoted and undertake Step Four.

10.3 The Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 allow for HPDS officers to be temporarily promoted and commence Step Four, even though a place may not be available in terms of force establishment figures. Only where there are concerns as to the ability of the HPDS candidate (which are reviewed by the Promotion Assessment Form) should an HPDS candidate be withheld from commencing Step Four.
10.4 As with non-HPDS candidates, HPDS candidates will be temporarily promoted to the aspired rank for a period of 12 months and assessed against the Qualification and Credit Framework units or NVQ units for that rank. As the HPDS process is time-limited, candidates should pass through the various stages without unnecessary delay.

A candidate should not be required to retake any module where they have previously been assessed as attaining the required standard. A requirement to retake a module to provide additional evidence can only be made if there is a robust case to do so and it is in line with the awarding bodies’ regulations on evidence and achievement. Delays in accessing Step Four or any of the assessments within the work-based assessment must be avoided.

10.5 Apart from exemption from NPPF Step Three, HPDS candidates should be treated the same as other candidates – that is, with no guarantee of substantive promotion and subject to the same assessment methods. If a HPDS candidate is removed at Step Four, they must wait for 12 months from the date they revert to their substantive rank before they can make a further attempt at Step Three by resubmitting a Promotion Assessment Form, if still a part of the HPDS. If they are outside the HPDS scheme, then the candidate can apply for selection at Step Three alongside non-HPDS candidates, again only after 12 months from the date they revert to their substantive rank. They must be supported with a development plan during this period.

10.6 For more information relating to the HPDS, see the High Potential Development Scheme Manual of Guidance, May 2008.

11. Constable to inspector
Fast Track process

The constable to inspector Fast Track promotion process will replace HPDS, although there will be some overlap when both processes will be run within forces. There are two routes into the programme:

- external graduates, members of the special constabulary and members of police staff who are subsequently attested as constables
- existing constables.

11.1 Fast Track programme members must go through all steps of the NPPF, with the exception of Step Three.
11.2 Fast Track officers do not have to complete Step Three of the NPPF and are prioritised at Step Four over and above other officers, even if there are limited places. This means that, although Fast Track officers are required to meet the same standards, they can progress more quickly than normal promotion opportunities may allow while demonstrating the appropriate level of competence.

11.3 Furthermore, the promotion of a Fast Track officer is, by regulation, not subject to or affected by vacancies. Therefore, subject to being appropriately qualified as set out above, officers will be promoted to temporary sergeant at the start of year two, substantive sergeant at the start of year three and then, upon successfully completing the programme, temporary inspector. Apart from exceptional personal circumstances, there is no provision to delay these promotion timescales. Should an officer fail to gain promotion, this will trigger their removal from the programme, from which point they will revert to a standard track career path.

**Step One**
Candidates accepted onto the Fast Track process and who are supported by their force will be considered as meeting the Step One eligibility criteria and may apply during their 12-month probationary period. Candidates must still register with the College of Policing to be able to undertake Step Two.

**Step Two**
Candidates, even though they hold the rank of constable, will be entered into the sergeant to inspector NPPF Step Two legal knowledge examination.

Officers attaining 65% or above in the examination will move to NPPF Step Four.

Officers achieving 55% or higher but less than 65% will be allowed the opportunity to remain on the Fast Track programme as temporary sergeants, subject to the approval of their chief officer lead. Such officers will be provided an opportunity to retake the inspector’s Step Two exam the following year. Failure to achieve 65% at the second attempt will result in removal from the programme and reverting to a standard track career path.

**Step Three**
The local selection process does not apply to Fast Track officers. A Fast Track officer will submit a Promotion Assessment Report (PAR) during the final year of the Fast Track programme. The PAR process replaces Step Three and progress is dependent on line manager recommendation and agreement by senior management within the home force.
Step Four
Officers who attain 55% or higher at NPPF Step Two will be temporarily promoted to the rank of sergeant and commence the 12-month work-based assessment for that rank. Following substantive promotion to the rank of sergeant, Fast Track candidates are eligible to apply for temporary promotion to the rank of inspector. While they may apply at this stage, candidates must have 12 months’ substantive service in the rank of sergeant and have successfully graduated from the Fast Track programme before being temporarily promoted to the rank of inspector. On being temporarily promoted to the rank of inspector, candidates will be eligible to commence the 12-month work-based assessment for that rank.

12. OSPRE I and II qualified candidates
Most forces will have a number of officers who have previously completed the OSPRE promotion process and as such are qualified for promotion. Subject to meeting any local selection criteria, these officers are qualified to apply at Step Three. If selected they should be substantively promoted as discussed at chapter 6.10 above.

12.1 The primary function of the Step Three process is to select in open competition the very best candidates who show potential for operating at the next rank. As such, both the NPPF Step Two-qualified candidates and the OSPRE I and II-qualified candidates should be assessed in a single Step Three process.

12.2 Chief officers may hold separate selection events if they wish, but the process and questions in each must be identical and not provide an advantage to one group over the other. Equally, candidates cannot be prioritised over the other because they have participated in a particular promotion route. Adopting such practice is not only ethically unsound but may lead to legal challenge.

13. Equality impact assessment – information to forces
The NPPF was subject to a wide-ranging equality impact assessment where a number of issues were identified. While these were not discriminatory, they have the potential to place some officers at a disadvantage. The equality-based data returned by forces will continue to be analysed and, where necessary, considered by the College for further action.

This does not, however, remove the requirement for each force to consider the equality impact at and post-implementation and, where necessary, take steps to remove or justify any disadvantage identified.

The full College-based equality impact assessment is published on the College website.
14. Contact

The website address for the National Police Promotion Framework project is: http://www.college.police.ukPromotion/Pages/nppf

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