

Police recruitment supported online into 2022

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Process brought in to support forces in recruiting officers during the coronavirus pandemic to continue

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As part of the policing response to COVID-19, the College designed and delivered an online assessment process to allow police in England and Wales to continue recruiting new officers during the pandemic.

The online assessment process will remain in place until 31 March 2022 – after an evaluation and independent peer review as well as additional analysis of national and force-level results and stakeholder feedback – with a review point in January next year. This will help to provide consistency and certainty for candidates and forces.

The evaluation report and an independent peer review report, both conclude that the online process is fit for purpose to assess the standard of new officers joining the service.

The online assessment process is being used by all 43 Home Office forces in England and Wales, with more than 24,000 candidates already receiving their results.

The evaluation report analysed the results of more than 17,000 candidates who used the online assessment process from 4 May 2020 to 14 January 2021. It found that the percentage of White female and male candidates who were successful using the online process was very similar to SEARCH, the assessment process previously used by policing.

More ethnic minority candidates were successful using the online process (62.6%) compared with SEARCH (55.8%). This means that when comparing ethnic minority candidates to White candidates, the adverse impact ratio improved to 85.1% (from 76% under SEARCH). This suggests that the assessment process does not have a statistically notable adverse impact between these groups.

The report shows that there is still a gap between the performance of White (73.6% pass rate) and ethnic minority (62.6% pass rate) candidates overall, although there are considerable variations

between the pass rates for different ethnic minority groups.

The College is analysing the data to further understand the reasons for the difference in outcomes between White and ethnic minority candidates.

The independent peer review by diversity experts concluded that, overall, the College has produced a valid and objective set of selection materials. No sources of bias or unfair discrimination that could negatively affect different groups of candidates were identified within the assessment.

I am pleased to confirm that, to ensure fairness and consistency for candidates and forces during the ongoing pandemic, our online assessment process will remain in place until early next year.

It is encouraging that the evaluation report shows the online assessment process, which is being used by every force in England and Wales, is fit for purpose.

The online assessments were designed and delivered at pace by the College of Policing as a temporary solution to allow police forces to continue to recruit new officers to the same high standards during this critical time.

While it is positive the report found the online process is effective, and the diversity outcomes are improved, we are not complacent and know that more needs to be done to further reduce the disparity in outcomes for under-represented groups.

We are working with forces on the other stages of the overall recruitment process to ensure that locally managed elements of the selection processes are effective and support diverse recruitment.

Jo Noakes, director of workforce development, College of Policing

To support police forces in further improving their recruitment processes, the College is working with policing on:

- updating the national police constable application form to better support recruitment, ensuring it is current and inclusive by design
- providing practical guidance, tools and workshops to all forces that focus on identifying and removing any disparity between candidate groups within locally managed selection processes.

This includes any local assessment of applicants before they are invited to take the online assessment and local interview processes

- developing consistent standards for local selection processes used by police forces

Download the reports

- [Independent peer review of initial recruit online assessment \(pdf\) 340.14 KB](#)
- [Online assessment process evaluation \(pdf\) 662.1 KB](#)

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