

Online process to support police recruitment effective, independent review finds

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Assessments designed and delivered at pace to help forces in England and Wales during the coronavirus pandemic

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The online assessment process introduced by the College of Policing to support police forces in recruiting officers during the COVID-19 pandemic is proving effective, according to the initial findings of a recent evaluation and independent review.

The online assessment process was designed and delivered at pace to help police forces in England and Wales assess the required competencies and values that are important for police constables, while COVID-19 restrictions remain in place.

The College is now delivering online assessments to all 43 Home Office forces in England and Wales, with more than 22,000 candidates having been invited to undertake the assessment and more than 13,000 candidates already receiving their results.

An evaluation and independent peer review of the online process has been carried out and found that it is fit for purpose as an assessment process. The evaluation included:

- analysis of assessment outcomes
- candidate and assessor experiences
- a study on marking consistency and interviews with force leads and senior stakeholders

The independent review looked at the assessment content, materials and language which focused on fair selection and inclusion.

Analysis of the assessment results found that the percentage of White, female and male candidates who have been successful in the online assessment process is very similar to the success rates of these groups in previous assessment processes. A higher percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates have been successful in online assessments compared with previous

assessment processes.

While the improved diversity outcomes of this process – compared with previous processes – are encouraging, there is still a gap between the performance of White and Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates. Further analysis is required to monitor and understand this disparity and the College is committed to doing everything possible to close the gap.

The evaluation and review also made a number of recommendations as to further improvements to the online assessment process and those changes will be implemented by the College over the coming weeks.

To ensure consistency and fairness to all candidates and because of ongoing national COVID-19 restrictions, the online assessment process will remain in place until at least June 2021, with a review on timeframes for delivery of any different process at the end of March 2021.

The College is working with the Police Uplift Programme and forces on the other stages of the whole recruitment process to ensure that locally managed selection processes are fair, effective and support diverse recruitment.

The College of Policing has introduced a range of measures, including the online assessment process, which is now being used by every force in England and Wales to support the recruitment of officers while ensuring standards are maintained.

While it is encouraging that the evaluation and independent review of the online assessment process found it is effective, and the diversity outcomes are improved compared with previous processes, we are not complacent and know that more needs to be done across policing to develop a diverse workforce which truly represents the communities we serve.

We are working closely with colleagues in the Police Uplift Programme to carefully monitor the results of the assessment process and we continue to make further improvements with the aim of reducing the disparity in outcomes from under-represented groups.

Jo Noakes, Director of Workforce Development, College of Policing

Preparations are underway for the first force-run online assessments, which will give forces greater control over the frequency and capacity of their assessment processes.

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