

FAQ's - RECRUITMENT PROCESS

PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITIONS	
<i>I have a cold. Should I still attend the medical?</i>	<p>No. This is not advisable as the cold can affect some of the tests we do like the lung functions (spirometry) and hearing tests (audiometry).</p> <p>We would advise that you ring in and arrange a new appointment.</p>
<i>I am waiting for an operation. Would this delay my application?</i>	<p>This depends on the type of operation e.g. where this is a larger operation and a period of convalescence is required or the outcome is unknown.</p> <p>Minor procedures (e. g. surgery for an ingrown toe nail or removal of a benign skin lesion) would not usually delay the application process.</p>
<i>I am an Insulin-dependent diabetic. Can I join?</i>	<p>In most cases this will be possible provided your diabetes is well managed, blood sugar control is satisfactory and most importantly, you are not prone to hypoglycaemic episodes requiring assistance from a third party.</p> <p>Restrictions to driving may be required. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>When you attend your medical, bring along your blood sugar meter and information from the GP or the diabetic clinic regarding overall management of your condition and your latest HbA1C. There are also very useful mobile Apps and you may wish to show us your readings if they are saved on the App.</p>
<i>I wear glasses for short-sightedness. Without glasses my vision is poor. Would I be suitable for the role of Police Officer?</i>	<p>As long as you meet the vision standards for corrected vision (that is your vision with glasses or contact lenses) you should be good. We will assess this and in some cases (complex prescriptions) may even contact your optician.</p>
<i>I have been told I have a mild colour deficiency. It doesn't really affect me in everyday life. Can I still become a firearms officer or at least become a Taser officer?</i>	<p>This will not affect your application for the general role of 'police officer'. There are however, very strict standards for Firearms and Taser Officers. This reflects the Forces efforts to avoid situations that could have a tragic outcome. As such, you would be excluded from undertaking these roles in the future.</p>
<i>When I was a baby I underwent heart surgery. I don't know anything about the type of surgery I had. All I know is that I am absolutely fine now and do exercises and sports regularly. Can I join the Police?</i>	<p>This would depend on the underlying heart condition for which you had surgery. You may be absolutely fine however, in some cases; there is the possibility of you needing further surgery at some point. We would advise you try to find out as much as possible about your operation and the condition and try to obtain</p>

	<p>copies of the old clinic letters. In some cases, a new cardiology assessment may be required.</p> <p>The two key questions that we need to address are if you can safely undertake strenuous physical exercises and what is the long-term prognosis of your heart condition.</p> <p>Any medical condition which increases your risk of health problems later in life and early ill health retirement may require exclusion from the ill-health benefits component (the insurance component) of the Police Pension scheme.</p>
<p><i>I have been diagnosed with Asperger's which a form of autism. Can I join the Police?</i></p>	<p>You may still be able to join but might require reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act. It would be very helpful to see the report from when you had your diagnostic assessment. Such reports often come with a list of recommended adjustments.</p> <p>If you believe you may be on the autistic spectrum you should undergo an assessment before you apply.</p> <p>Whilst reasonable adjustments will be considered you should be able to effectively interact with members of the public and be able to take an empathetic approach. These are intrinsic qualities of the role of Police Officer.</p>
<p><i>I have a skin condition, psoriasis. How would this affect my chances of joining the Police?</i></p>	<p>Our assessment is made on a case-by-case basis. In most cases you should be able to join. We would expect that the skin condition is either mild or very well controlled and is unlikely to interfere with your role. Further information may be required from your skin specialist.</p>
<p><i>I have submitted my application and the medical questionnaire, had my medical assessment and been passed fit. Since then I have suffered an injury/had a new medical diagnosis. Do I need to inform you about this?</i></p>	<p>You should advise us of any changes in your health status at any time and all stages in the recruitment process.</p>
<p><i>I wear hearing aids. Can I still join the Police?</i></p>	<p>In many cases people with hearing impairments will be able to join as a Police Officer as long as they can do the role of Police Officer safely. You will be asked to undergo a practical work-based scenario (trade test) with an experienced Police Officer to assess the impact of your hearing impairment on communication.</p> <p>The test is based around both verbal and radio communication in a realistic work setting.</p> <p>Modern digital hearing aids have proven very effective in this respect. Occasionally hearing aids may need</p>

	<p>resetting. Sometimes a newer generation hearing aid may be required.</p>
<p><i>I understand the BMI must not be higher than 30. Is this a problem to my recruitment to join the Police?</i></p>	<p>Our BMI standard is based on the guidelines published by the College of Policing.</p> <p>High body weight and fat tissue percentage are linked to joint problems, diabetes, heart problems and cancer.</p> <p>Where BMI is found to me above 30 we also look at the percentage of your body that is made up of fat. If this is outside the standards we defer pending a review at a later date (usually 3 months).</p> <p>Losing weight (or rather fat tissue) is under your control and with a good healthy balanced low-carb diet and regular cardiovascular exercise this is usually a goal that can be realistically achieved over the course of several months.</p> <p>It is up to you to make these lifestyle changes and demonstrate your commitment to your new job as a Police Officer.</p>
<p><i>I do a lot of training and weight-lifting so my BMI is naturally much higher. Is this a problem to my recruitment to join the Police?</i></p>	<p>Our BMI standard is based on the guidelines published by the College of Policing. We recognise that BMI can be higher than normal in someone who does a lot of weight training and therefore has a higher muscle mass.</p> <p>We also look at the percentage of your body that is made up of fat. If this is outside the standards we defer pending a review at a later date (usually 3 months).</p>
<p>MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS</p>	
<p><i>I have a mental health problem. My friend says I don't have to declare this as it would not help my application, and I am fine now. Can I not just omit this from the questionnaire?</i></p>	<p>Absolutely not. You have an obligation to truthfully declare all relevant health conditions; even if your mental health has been stable for a long period of time.</p> <p>The force places great emphasis on truthfulness and personal integrity. As such, any failure to withhold relevant health information can have serious consequences.</p>
<p><i>I am taking antidepressants for depression. My depression is really well controlled. Would this affect my application?</i></p>	<p>Each decision is made after a careful consideration of the facts. The severity of the condition is reflected by the type of antidepressant, its strength and the duration of treatment in addition to many other factors.</p>

	<p>We would also consider the 2004 Home Office guidance which generally advises against accepting recruits whilst they are still being treated with antidepressants and for a period after stopping them. We recognise that this is guidance but guidance holds a particular status in law.</p> <p>The main goal of the assessment is to determine your mental resilience and the probability of further episodes of impaired mental health. Police work is like no other and good mental resilience and emotional stability are paramount.</p>
<p><i>A few years ago I went through a difficult patch in my life. In desperation I took an overdose. In hindsight, I deeply regret this. I was assessed at the hospital but I have not been given any specific diagnosis for this. Do I need to declare this?</i></p>	<p>Each decision is made after a careful consideration of the facts.</p> <p>You have an obligation to truthfully declare all relevant health conditions or adverse life effects that could indicate either a medical condition or impaired mental resilience.</p> <p>Overdoses, self-harming, abnormal eating patterns, longer absences from work, mood swings, behavioural issues and excessive alcohol or substance use, past or present, should all be declared.</p> <p>The Force places great emphasis on truthfulness and personal integrity. As such, any failure to withhold relevant health information can have serious consequences.</p>
<p><i>I have depression for which I am on medication. When I had my medical I was told I was not suitable for the role. I was advised that I should be off the medications and be symptom-free for at least six months. I went back to my GP who said I should stay on the medications for longer as they were helping me to remain well. Where do I stand here?</i></p>	<p>You must never stop taking medications merely to join the Police. The medications were prescribed for a good reason by your own doctor. If you must stay on the medications than this usually signals that the GP has concerns about your mental health, and your mental resilience may not be sufficient to cope with the very high demands of the Police Officer role. Often in such cases we might contact the GP to obtain further information and to better understand the rationale for prescribing these medications.</p> <p>However, if you feel much better now (and this was just an isolated episode) than your GP may decide to taper medications off gradually. We would usually wait for at least six months after they have been stopped completely because this is the time span when the risk of a relapse is the highest.</p> <p>Ultimately any decision regarding your care is between your GP and you. The fact that your GP prescribed medications (SSRIs) suggests that your condition was considered to be at least moderately</p>

	<p>severe by your GP. Milder forms of depression usually do not require treatment with medications.</p> <p>Our assessment is based on whether or not you are physically, psychologically and emotionally stable for a reasonable period of time and fit to undertake the role being applied for bearing in mind the high physical and emotional demands required. We also have to consider an individual's resilience to cope with the role.</p>
<p><i>I have a mental health condition. This is an invisible condition. Only I know how I feel and I have good and bad days. How can your doctor assess me? If I tell him I am fine should the doctor not just accept this?</i></p>	<p>Each decision is made after a careful consideration of the relevant facts.</p> <p>The role of Police Officer is both mentally and physically very demanding. You work shifts, you work under pressure, you see and experience terrible things. Some members of the public disrespect you, treat you with contempt and may even assault you. So you have to be very strong and resilient in order to protect your own mental health.</p> <p>What we aim is to assess your overall mental resilience and the likely prognosis of your condition over the course of your career with the Police.</p> <p>This can be hard to do, however, there are certain criteria that would suggest a higher chance of a worsening of your mental health in the future and reduced mental resilience.</p> <p>These factors include (list not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a longstanding history of mental health issues • multiple episodes of mental ill-health • antidepressants prescribed for longer and at higher doses • treatment with medications like antipsychotics • hospital treatment for your mental ill-health • struggles with minor adverse life events • where there were no obvious triggers for a condition • use of self-harming as a mal-adjusted coping mechanism • history of suicide attempts • behavioural problems • substance abuse <p>These may all be indicators indicating that you are at a much higher risk of suffering ill health whilst working in the Police.</p>

	<p>The kind of mental health condition you have had may also provide clues to its prognosis and the risk of relapses, deterioration risk and prognosis.</p> <p>When you join the Police, we have a duty of care to protect your future wellbeing. This includes ensuring, as far as reasonably possible, that your mental health does not get worse due to the high demands of the role.</p> <p>We will assess your mental health according to these and other relevant criteria and we may also request further information from your GP.</p>
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DISABILITY WITHIN THE EQUALITY ACT

<p><i>I have a specific disability and according to the Equality Act will require certain reasonable adjustments at work. What kind of adjustments can the Police support?</i></p>	<p>Under the <i>Equality Act 2010</i> employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for a person with disability who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applies for a job, is offered employment, or is an employee, and • requires the adjustments in order to participate in the recruitment process or perform the genuine and reasonable requirements of the job. <p>Many employees with disability will not need any workplace adjustments. Some may need only minor changes or adjustments to their work hours or the performance requirements of the job, while others may require specific equipment or some structural change to the workplace.</p> <p>For the Police this means you should still be able to fill an operational role despite the need for certain adjustments. In other words, you should be able to safely chase after and arrest a suspect and be able to drive a car (Special Constables may not have to drive) and make critical decisions under pressure.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments that could be considered by the Force are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extra time (within reason) to complete written assignments or to take statements • some adjustments to workload • a buddy system • some adjustments to the shift pattern. <p>Various office-based adjustments should also be possible. This list is not exclusive and this will be decided on a case-by-case basis and obviously depends on the underlying disability.</p>
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<p><i>I have been diagnosed with epilepsy. I have not had a seizure for 2 years and the DVLA is happy for me to drive a car. Can I join the Police?</i></p>	<p>Epilepsy per se is not a hindrance to join the Police as long as your condition is stable and well-controlled and you have been seizure-free for at least twelve months.</p> <p>However, your condition may require certain restrictions (which technically may also be considered as adjustments under the Equality Act).</p> <p>The professional driving (vocational) standards for Level 1 to 5 driving would normally be aligned with the Group 2 standards set by the DVLA. Police standards for driving can be higher than the DVLA particularly for the higher levels of vocational driving. This is at the discretion of the individual Force.</p> <p>If you are allowed to drive under the Group 1 standard of the DVLA (this means yearly risk of you having a seizure is assessed as no more than 20%) then you would be able to commute to and from work and potentially may be able to undertake some limited driving at Level 1 if your condition is very well controlled. This is at the discretion of the Force doctor.</p> <p>For any other kind of vocational driving (Level 2 and higher) the expectation would be that the annual risk of you suffering a seizure is no more than 2%. This is usually only the case if you have been off medications for ten years or more without suffering any further seizures.</p>
<p>OBTAINING SIGN OFF FROM A GP</p>	
<p><i>My GP refuses to complete the medical questionnaire. The GP says I have never attended the surgery since my registration. Can the GP refuse to complete the questionnaire?</i></p>	<p>You are registered with a GP and the fact that you never had to see your GP is good news indeed. Countersigning the forms falls outside of the GP's NHS Contract hence a small charge is made by them for this service. You should ask the GP to sign off your health declaration on the basis of comparison with their own records. You may wish to direct the GP to this part of the website.</p>
<p><i>The GP refuses to answer the following question on my medical questionnaire: 'From the medical records available, is there a medical reason why your patient should not undertake strenuous physical exercise?'</i></p>	<p>Whilst the GP does not know for sure whether you can safely undertake strenuous exercises, <i>he can tell us of any medical reason he already knows about you that would suggest you cannot do so.</i></p>
<p><i>The GP charged me an arm and a leg for my application. Can I claim this back from the Police?</i></p>	<p>Regrettably we do not reimburse applicants for fees charged by GP's or other third parties. Most GPs will charge a reasonable fee for this type of work.</p>

	<p>The Police advises GPs that excessive fees put people off from applying for the role of Police Officer and we would advise their charge is fair and reasonable and reflects their actual time commitment in terms of reviewing your (probably very short) medical record and signing the document.</p> <p>Many applicants apply for the Special Constable role and thereby provide a free but very valuable service to the public and society as a whole.</p> <p>Your GP will appreciate your commitment and do their part to support PC recruits and volunteers. Feel free to direct your GP to this website.</p>
<p><i>I have recently moved house and had to register again. My new GP is still waiting for the old medical records. Who should complete the medical questionnaire? The new or the old GP?</i></p>	<p>Ideally, this would be the GP who has your records available to check over you questionnaire. Contact both GPs and let them know of your dilemma. This is a private service so it does not matter where you are currently registered. It only matters who has access to your records. If the records are already in transition then you may have to wait until such time that the new GP has received them.</p>
<p><i>I am in the Armed Forces and have no ordinary GP. Who should complete the medical questionnaire?</i></p>	<p>The doctor working for the Armed Force will be able to complete the form.</p>
<p>MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS</p>	
<p><i>The doctor who examined me for my application did not pass me fit. How do I appeal against his decision?</i></p>	<p>There is no formal appeals procedure as such (only vetting decisions can be appealed) and the decision is therefore final.</p> <p>However, you may wish to submit new evidence to support your application e.g. a GP or specialist letter/report and we would look at this information in order to decide if this changes the original decision provided the new evidence is presented to us no later than three months after the original decision has been made.</p>
<p><i>I have passed the interview stage and the fitness (bleep/ shuttle) test. Is this a good time to hand in my resignation with my current employer?</i></p>	<p>You should take advice from the recruitment team regarding handing in your notice with your current employer.</p> <p>The medical examination is one of the last assessments to becoming a police officer however not every candidate is automatically passed fit.</p>

