



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>SPA People Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>25 February 2025</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Videoconference</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Recruitment, Promotion and Succession Planning</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Katy Miller, Director of People and Development</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>Appendix A: Audit/Inspection Recommendations Appendix B: Activity aligned to Strategy Commitments</b>

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this paper is to:

- Demonstrate the criticality of Recruitment, Promotion and Succession Planning to the delivery of Strategic Outcomes
- Outline progress made in relation to relevant strategic commitments
- Assess the impact in improving performance, mitigating strategic risks and delivering recommendations from audits/inspections

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this paper.

## 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. As part of a transition to a fully refreshed approach to People Committee reporting, this report sets out a proposed reporting approach focusing on alignment to strategic themes, mitigation of strategic risks, delivery of recommendations from audits/inspections and the overall impact of activity.

## 2 STRATEGIC COMMITMENT

- 2.1 Relevant Recruitment, Promotion and Succession Planning commitments sit within and across the People Strategy, Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) and Policing Together. These include:
- Attracting and retaining talent with clarity on skills capabilities and experiences needed
  - Creating a culture and mechanisms to identify and nurture talented individuals through a mix of effective recruitment, enhanced development opportunities, strategic workforce planning and succession planning ensuring we have the right people in the right place at the right time
  - Values-based recruitment, development and promotion processes that remove barriers to under-represented groups to ensure our workforce is as demographically representative as possible
  - An improved brand and candidate experience
  - Leadership development to support leaders for the future
- 2.2 As well as delivering the strategic intent of the organisation this work supports the mitigation of strategic and organisational people risks and the delivery of relevant HMICS Inspections (See Appendix A).

<b>People Risk</b>	<b>Risk Register</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>
If policing does not invest time/resource in identifying future talent and developing current/future leaders, there is risk of lack of capable, resilient and diverse leadership, resulting in lack of strong accountability and weakened ability to deliver/support effective policing and develop organisational culture.	Strategic	12  (Impact 4 x Probability 3)

<p>If officer attrition remains high there is risk skills/ knowledge associated with rank/role will be difficult to replace without capacity for remaining officers to take on workload of leavers, resulting in poorer quality of service.</p>	<p>Organisational</p>	<p>12  (Impact 4 x Probability 3)</p>
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2.3 There is a clear link between the activity being progressed (Appendix B) and these risks. However, it is recognised that the range of activity ongoing and being planned needs to sit within effective talent and succession planning frameworks to support medium and long-term strategic workforce planning (as outlined at section 4). It is also recognised that there needs to be a focus on authority/police staff as well as police officers in this area. More focus will be placed on this in year two of the delivery of the People Strategy and SWP.

### **3 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT**

This section considers key impact measures and evidence that assesses the effectiveness of recruitment, promotion, talent and succession planning processes.

#### **3.1 Recruitment**

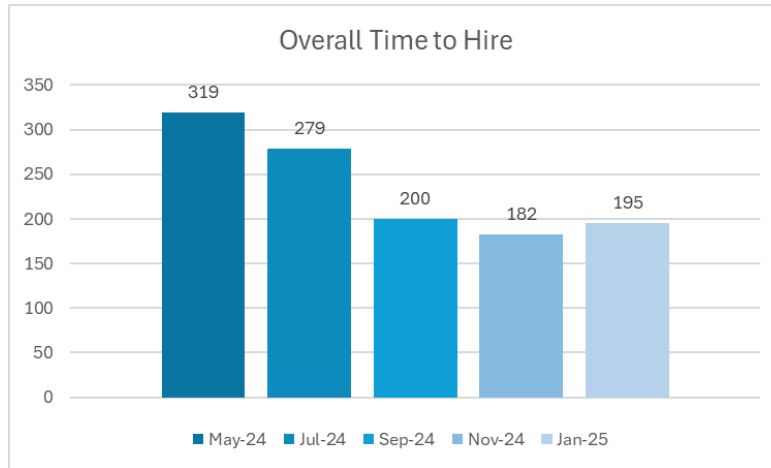
##### **3.1.1 Candidate Experience**

Since Q1 2024/25 survey information is collected from successful and unsuccessful applicants. Key findings to date are:

	<b>Data</b>	<b>Insight</b>
Officers	88% of applicants found overall experience positive. Only 3% of unsuccessful applicants found experience below average	Early indications show broadly positive candidate experience. Most significant issue relates to length of process
	23% of successful applicants found length of process negative (compared to 5% of unsuccessful)	
Staff	24% of unsuccessful applicants found overall process negative compared to 2% of successful	
	Most negative views of those successful linked to length of process	

## Time to Hire

Linked to findings above and the Independent Recruitment MOT (Appendix B) recommendation to reduce the Time to Hire period, the table below shows the extent Time to Hire has changed over time.



The pre-appointment stage can have the biggest impact on Time to Hire as this includes medical/vetting and references. Priority is being given to ensuring the vetting team are properly resourced and an independent review of the criteria and process in relation to medical assessments has taken place (see Appendix B). Other aspects that can cause delays can relate to candidate preferences regarding the timing of joining, notice period with current employer and waiting for a specific division/posting preference.

### 3.1.2 Police Officer Application Rates

The rate of officer retirements has increased in recent years following changes to pension regulations. This has resulted in significant work to ensure sufficiency in applicants of a suitable quality to replace retired officers with new recruits. 952 probationers joined Police Scotland in 2024. This is the highest annual intake in the history of Police Scotland. This is testament to work progressed to ensure a sufficient pipeline of new recruits.

The data below shows trends in relation to applications, with these currently tracking higher than 2023/24 when there was no advertising campaign, and at a similar level to 2022/23 when there was also a marketing campaign.

<b>Year</b>	<b>App nos.</b>	<b>Per Day Equiv</b>	<b>Supported advertising</b>
2019/20	4,228	11.58	No advertising campaign
2020/21	5,611	15.37	No advertising campaign
2021/22	2,597	12	No advertising campaign
2022/23	3,841	10.52	National advertising campaign
2023/24	3,189	8.74	No advertising campaign
2024/25 Q1	901	9.9	No advertising campaign
2024/25 Q2	960	10.5	National Advertising campaign
2024/25 Q3	945	10.4	National Advertising campaign

From an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective applications rates are outlined below.

	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>Current Year</b>
Female	31%	30.6%	29%
BME	4.9%	5.7%	6.9%
WME	5.4%	6.9%	5.8%
Disabled	2.8%	3.5%	3.9%
LGBO	8.76%	7.9%	7.5%

Application rates that least represent the wider population census data are females (51%) and those with a disclosed disability (20%). The ONS Annual Population Survey in Scotland consistently highlights there is a significantly lower employment rate for disabled people compared to non-disabled, highlighting a broader societal issue. There is also a need to consider that there are limitations on the occupational suitability to the role which is determined by medical professionals. That said, the percentage of applicants with disclosed disability has increased year on year since 2022/23.

The above demonstrates that the work of the Positive Action Team (see Appendix B) is having a positive impact across the protected characteristics. There will remain a continued focus on the attraction, engagement, support and encouragement of female candidates. The recruitment team also provide consistent and meaningful engagement and implementation of reasonable adjustment considerations to potential candidates, where appropriate.

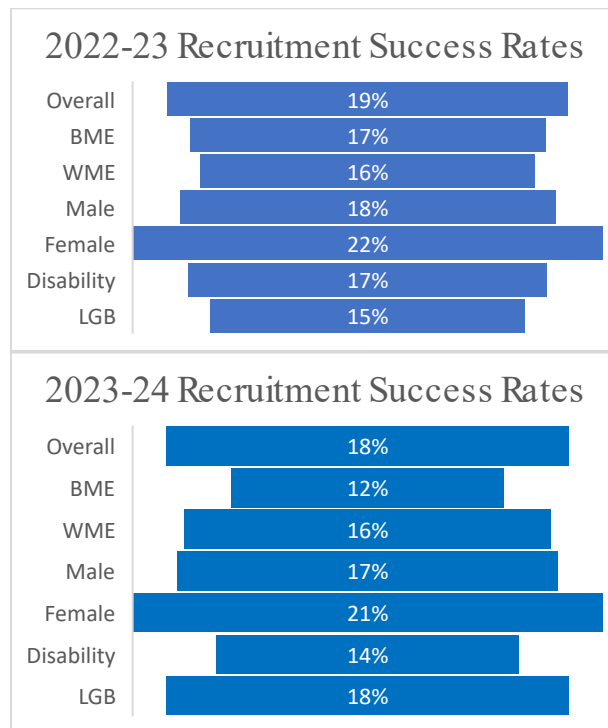
### 3.1.3 Police Officer Application Success/Failure Rates

The extent to which applications are successful supports an assessment of the quality of candidates and supports projections of the estimated number of applications that will be required to recruit

sufficient candidates to meet organisational requirements going forward.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>
Successful	19.2%	18.6%
Still live with no outcome	0.2%	1.4%

With regard to protected characteristics, the data below shows how applicant success rates compare to overall success rates.



This shows lower success rates for BME and disabled in 2023/24, although this relates to relatively small numbers and was also not the case in 2022/23. A more detailed review by each stage of the recruitment process has highlighted that BME candidates are disproportionately unsuccessful at shortlisting and vetting stages. The PAT are looking more closely to understand this and ensure consistent, appropriate advice and support is provided. Specifically in relation to vetting, a number of proposals have been initiated which would facilitate earlier engagement and intervention in support of BME candidates, such as:

- Face-to-face discussion for BME candidates in advance of a potential vetting refusal to fully ascertain key concerns or barriers.
- Liaising with the PAT to provide a vetting input as it is recognised that the PAT are generally the first point of contact for potential BME candidates.

- Further researching of the candidates who were the subject of a vetting refusal contained within this report.

## **3.2 Promotion**

### **3.2.1 Candidate and Assessor Experience**

Surveys (with assessors/candidates) and workshops (with senior leaders and statutory staff associations) have taken place to assess the effectiveness of the process. Feedback from assessors was overwhelmingly positive. Feedback from candidates was broadly positive with some dissatisfaction on lack of communication from local division and more detailed understanding of what to expect at assessment, including assessor expectation. More detail is included at Appendix B including detail of planned improvement actions.

### **3.2.2 Meeting Demand**

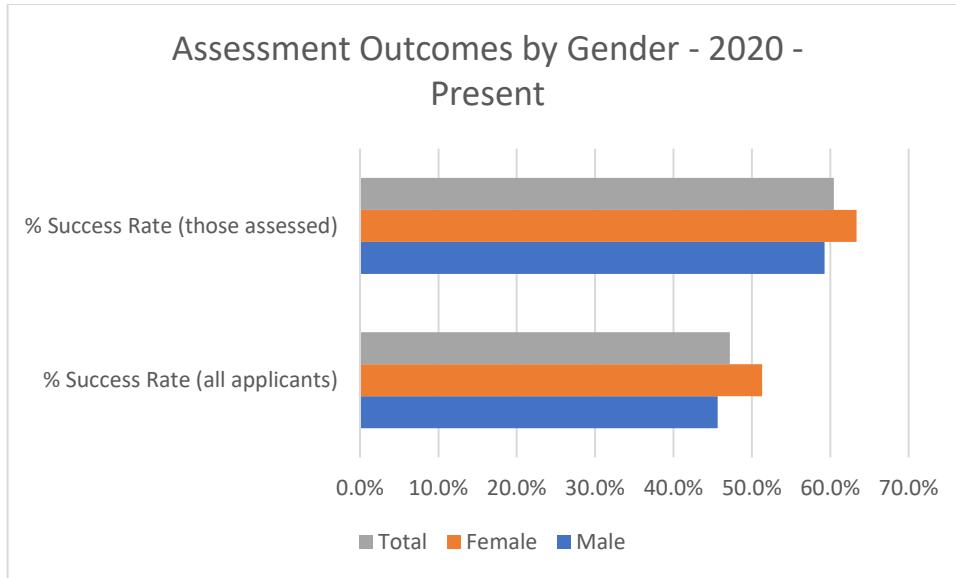
Since November 2023, 645 officers have been promoted. Promotion activity aligns to workforce attrition data forecasts over 12 months to meet demand. Quality assurance processes show promotion pools are 'clearing' within the planned forecast period of 12 months evidencing that talent pools in line with moderation scoring are delivering against organisational demands.

That said, there is a significant reliance on acting/temporary promotion. As at 29 October 2024 a total of 631.87 FTE officers were undergoing periods of temporary duty at a higher rank. More detail on issues associated with acting and temporary promotion and plans to resolve are included at Appendix B.

There is longer term work required to consider whether the approach should focus on 'Just in Time' or 'development of talent pools' together with operating principles in relation to talent management (see Section 4).

### **3.2.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Female applicants tend to perform better at assessment centre when compared with males.

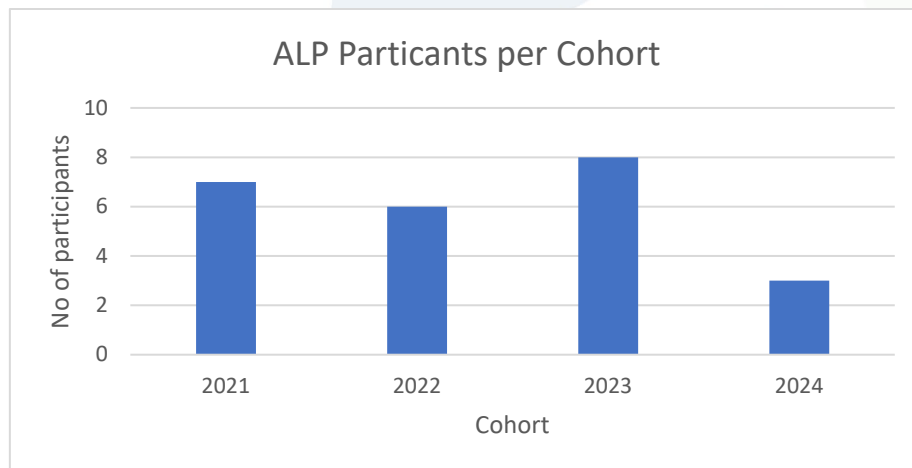


Data relating to other protected characteristics can be more variable due to the vast difference in group size, but no issues of concern are noted from analysis of the data.

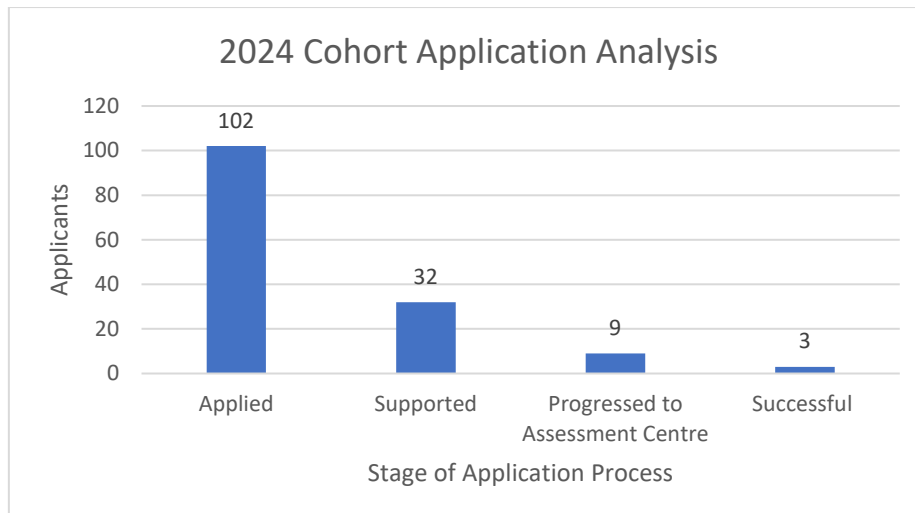
### 3.3 Talent/Succession Planning

#### 3.3.1 Accelerated Leadership Programme (ALP)

The ALP was launched for officers in September 2020 and more detail on the programme is included at Appendix B. Twenty-four officers split across four annual cohorts have participated in the programme.







The recent process saw an increase in applications from previous years. However, there is emerging anecdotal feedback that the overall quality of applications is not high enough, which is reflected in the high 'burn rates' at each process stage. This position is recognised by the national sifting panel with a view there is a general failure to anchor evidence/thinking around the real strategic challenges facing the organisation at this current time. Whether the programme is reaching and attracting those who genuinely should see ALP as something for them, or there are other factors at play needs to be considered as part of a review of the programme. In addition, there are continued concerns that the programme is not attracting a diverse pool of applicants.

A decision has been taken to progress a continuous improvement review of the approach, policy and impact to ensure ALP remains fit for purpose and achieves its intended objectives (See Appendix B).

### 3.3.2 Other Programmes

Other programmes are in place that seek to support talent management and succession planning including Your Leadership Matters, mentoring, coaching, a review of the Competency Values Framework, and targeted support for newly promoted Superintendent/Chief Superintendents.

More detail on these areas will be included within the Bi-annual Leadership & Talent Update.

## 4 **NEXT STEPS**

During year two of the delivery of the People Strategy and SWP a particular focus will be placed on the following areas.

#### **4.1 Recruitment**

- Seeking to further reduce the length of time of the recruitment process for officers and staff
- Seeking to ensure a sufficient and diverse pipeline of applicants, while monitoring and seeking to remove unnecessary barriers
- Scenario planning for officers by ranks and considering what that means for succession and promotion processes
- Continued development of the police officer probationer programme
- Consideration of implementation of probationary periods for staff

#### **4.2 Promotion and Talent/Succession Planning**

- Consideration and development of proposals in relation to staff talent/succession planning
- Implementing improvement actions from surveys/workshops
- Scenario planning for officers by ranks and considering what that means for succession and promotion processes
- Consideration of development of 'talent' criteria and approach to identification and assessment
- Consideration of 'Just in Time' or 'development of talent pools' together with development of operating principles covering colleague experience and principles of talent management.
- Consideration of the development of further leadership training and development to support promoted colleagues
- Consider future approach to use of Competency Values Framework and the MyCareer appraisal System
- Develop and implement Talent and Succession Planning Frameworks to drive activity above.

### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report

### **6 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are personnel implications outlined throughout this report.

### **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

## **8 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are reputational implications with effective recruitment, promotion and talent/succession planning processes essentially to effective delivery of policing.

## **9 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no social implications associated with this report.

## **10 COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 10.1 There are no social implications associated with this report.

## **11 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are equality implications within this report with processes and programmes related to recruitment, promotion and succession planning subject to EqHRIAs.

## **12 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the information contained within this report.

**APPENDIX A – AUDIT/INSPECTION RECOMMENDATIONS**

HMICS Training and Development Phase 2	
Recommendations	
Police Scotland should consider introducing a process for applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, to provide feedback on the recruitment process, in order to learn and improve	There is clear evidence of delivery of this recommendation within Appendix B.
Police Scotland should review the resource levels, location, and remit of the Positive Action Team to maximise the benefit of dedicating resource to engaging with under-represented communities, and proactively attracting and supporting applications from people from all under-represented groups.	Positive Action Team are always seeking to maximise the available resource. They make best use of available data & information such as Census/Policing Together Inclusion Calendar and engagement to inform areas/times of activity to increase and promote exposure. Given the percentage of BME/WME officers on intakes is reflective of current census data (those available for employment on age and eligibility which currently sits around 8.9% of the population according to 2022 data). The steps made by the PAT and successes shown through recent reporting indicates that the team are well placed as part of the wider recruitment team.
Police Scotland should identify ways to improve the understanding of the public and the understanding of its own workforce about the role and purpose of the Positive Action Team.	Information is available on intranet to describe the purpose of Positive Action Team and input is provided to all new probationary constables

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Police Scotland should accelerate its ongoing efforts to introduce an electronic recruitment system including implementing the diversity insights module at the earliest point of delivery.	The electronic recruitment system is now in place.
<b>HMICS Culture</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	
Police Scotland should ensure that the probationer training syllabus is more reflective of actual frontline demand and the Competency and Values Framework, to allow officers to feel equipped to deal with the realities of policing	Intent to deliver this Recommendation is evident in Appendix B.
<b>Areas for Development</b>	
Police Scotland should consider, measure and assess the level of 'churn' on the organisation and develop workforce planning approaches to both understand the effective level of turnover and mitigate its impact.	This is currently being considered as part of the overall Recommendation 2.
The Scottish Police Authority should consider commissioning regular reporting on Police Scotland promotion outcomes to ensure that there is fairness and equity in both national and local processes.	The development of a Recruitment, Promotion and Succession Planning Report to People Committee seeks to deliver this
Police Scotland should improve awareness and accessibility of reporting methods for probationers, while generally improving the culture of willingness to challenge and report.	Intent to deliver this area for development is evident in Appendix B.
<b>Independent Review Group on Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights – Final Report</b>	
Put in place monitoring and evaluation, disaggregated by protected characteristic for vetting and provide quarterly reports to Strategic Oversight Board.	Quarterly and Annual data is collated in relation to vetting and any potential adverse impact.  Vetting are alive to any potential emerging disproportionality trends or themes and this is also covered in quarterly reporting recruitment data through governance.
Ensure fairness and transparency in the promotion system (e.g., EqHRIA of the promotion criteria and make up of panels). Undertake more detailed analysis of who is	Review of EqHRIA for promotions underway and will aim to capture/document ongoing good practice.

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applying and getting promoted, who is not and why by protected characteristic.	Detailed EDI analysis on promotions related data is undertaken following each promotion process.
Consider the introduction of a values-based approach to vetting and recruitment.	All recruitment assessments are unpinned by the Competency and Values Framework for police officers and staff.

## APPENDIX B – ACTIVITY ALIGNED TO STRATEGY COMMITMENTS

This appendix is intended to provide more context and detail in support of the main paper.

### Independent Review of Recruitment

A recruitment audit/review of function (MOT) took place in September 2023.

Key Recommendations	Organisational Response
Seek to keep hiring days as low as possible	<p>Work ongoing to reduce Time to Hire with complex challenges re vetting/medical referrals. Vetting staff levels have increased and an independent review of medical standards has been carried out. See specific 'Review of Recruitment Medical Standards' section below.</p> <p>An improved process and relationship with Optima (Occupational Health provider) has been established re understanding of recruitment process and demands of the role. This has led to less candidates being medical deferred. This is complemented with introduction of Optima candidate led portal and ongoing action planning to address those medically deferred, which has resulted in shorter periods of medical deferred status.</p>
Create fuller story of working for Police Scotland through brand and positive stories	<p>New recruitment brand launched in September 2024 with core message 'A Job Like No Other' supported by range of officer led videos telling stories of what made officers decide to join.</p> <p>Work being progressed on Employee Value Proposition and adverts with more emphasis on benefits, rewards and job satisfaction alongside more clarity on salary and pensions etc.</p>
Ensure MI allows attraction strategy to be focused with effective corporate communications collaboration	<p>Weekly meeting implemented (including corporate communication) to discuss data, recruitment needs and delivery. Data now produced weekly showing application patterns and pipeline data supporting drive to direct attraction work in the right demographic and geographical areas.</p>
Develop 'talent banking' approaches to	<p>A new Graduate Programme was recently launched resulting in appointment of Digital Division graduates. Work continues to consider other graduate</p>

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increase candidate quality	opportunities. The Direct Source Team continue to work to attract high calibre candidates. More work required and planned to develop overall Talent Framework.
Community Engagement and Positive Action	<p>Police Scotland had first Showcase Event in June 2024 at Jackton allowing the community to access a variety of internal departments and specialist services. This attracted around 2,500 members of the community. There was a further event in Aberdeen in September 2024 which was lower key although important to ensure coverage across the country. The intention is to have an annual showcase event.</p> <p>Online events remain key focus for Positive Action Team (PAT) due to benefits of accessibility with priority on attracting females and those from minority ethnic and care experienced backgrounds. This is supported by in-person Careers Fairs, community based religious venues and ongoing engagement with Campus Officers to signpost recruitment processes to potential candidates. Information from the recent Scottish Census is informing PAT activity.</p> <p>The PAT team provide consistent contact point for potential candidates and thereafter throughout recruitment process. They also provide an input to probationary intakes outlining the purpose of the PAT.</p> <p>There is ongoing engagement and collaboration with Diversity Staff Associations with PAT supporting events and relevant association sub-groups. The PAT also participate and contribute to the Positive Action Practitioner Alliance with is led by National Police Chiefs' Council.</p>

**Review of Recruitment Medical Standards**

UK Police Forces, including Police Scotland, apply Home Office medical standards guidance for police officer recruitment (published in 2004). These are applied through a medical assessment by Optima Health towards the end of the recruitment process before a decision is taken re appointment.

Police Scotland identified concerns with the 2004 guidance given the impact and influence of succeeding legislation and societal changes. Further concerns related areas such as eyesight and hearing standards,



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and mental health, specifically in relation to depression and prescribed antidepressant medications.

An independent review was commissioned to examine these concerns and to formulate an evidenced view on what medical standards needed to change, if any. Following a competitive selection process, Dr Ahmad Risk (MBChB) was selected to carry out the review, which commenced on 28 November 2023 and concluded on 28 March 2024.

Following the review guidance has been produced providing a clear indication to medical practitioners re conditions that can be progressed, those that cannot and those that can be deferred. This up-to-date guidance provides a current viewpoint from an independent medical provider and is robust in ensuring police regulations regarding medical fitness for the role is maintained. The guidance has been produced in consultation with Optima Healthcare and other relevant stakeholders and takes cognisance of employer responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

As part of the work Dr Risk has highlighted three areas for special consideration outlined in the table below:

Area	Context
Hearing Standards	Guiding principle is no recruit should be denied opportunity to join based on failure to meet stated hearing standards, provided both ears meet standards, one of which can be corrected using hearing aid device, as this takes note of need to wear in-ear police communications device in the other ear.
Mental Health, particularly depression and use of antidepressant medication	Candidates diagnosed with chronic depression may be appointable provided period of at least 12 months of complete remission, and without any symptoms or use of medication. However, this will require a full assessment by a medical practitioner.  Depression resulting from adverse life events may be appointable for recruitment, provided episode is short-lived and candidate is recovered fully with no symptoms/medication for period of at least three months.  Mental health considerations should be assessed on case-by-case basis.
Deferral Period	In all cases where there is request to defer determination pending further information and investigation it is recommended there is a cut off time to close the application. This period allows for gathering of information from candidate's General Practitioner records and other sources and to complete

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	the Occupational Health assessment. The advice is that it would be reasonable for this cut off limit to be a period of three to six months
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It is anticipated that this work will positively impact on the Time to Hire candidates within the process.

**Review of Probationary Training**

The ongoing review of Police Officer Probationer Training has an overarching aim of creating operationally competent policing professionals with the right skills to be effective police officers with a focus on:

- Being Values Based and Human Informed
- Placing equal Emphasis on the What, How & Why
- Increased Personal Resilience Training
- Increased Reflective Learning Opportunities
- Shifting from Occupational to Professional
- Achieving a Learning Culture and Environment

The review is progressing in recognition of the fact current training programme is predominately an occupational training programme with a focus on legislation. The ambition is to move towards professionalising the learning to be more capability focused and practice-orientated to support long-term understanding aiding the development of effective ethical decision making.

Work has progressed to move further away from a semi-militaristic approach and a hierarchical environment towards one which is more conducive to learning with a focus on self-discipline rather than unquestioning compliance with focus on psychological safety to challenge when necessary.

The timetable itself has been too intensive with probationers moving from topic to topic with limited opportunity to apply learning in practical exercises. This has been partly addressed by increasing the duration of the initial module by two weeks. However, there is still a focus on providing greater opportunities for recruits to be able to practice hands-on, scenario based, practical applications of the legislation in a safe environment with time for discussion and reflection.

Following a series of recommendations from a short-life working group significant changes have already been made to the structure of the course including

- The introduction of a regional induction week
- Thematic integration of equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights

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- A communication and de-escalation package (act, don't react) which incorporates trauma, behavioural training, resilience and awareness of neurodiversity.
- Introduction of mechanisms to support probationers during transition period from Scottish Police College to division

In a first for Police Scotland, non-residential training is being trialled to facilitate officers with caring demands and responsibilities, allowing them to return home each day. The opportunity to complete the majority of training in a non-residential setting is expected to provide real benefit to those who would otherwise have been unable to consider a role in policing. The trial is being evaluated for future delivery of Police Scotland's ongoing recruitment drive.

There is an obvious advantage for some of our candidates to have access to non-residential training options. There is now a process in place at the final offer stage to gather candidate views as to their preference. This information is taken into consideration when selecting training options and every effort is now made to ensure the candidate receives the best option for them.

### **Review of Promotion Process**

In 2018, People and Development tendered for and engaged an external company (TMP) to design an assessment for all ranks from Sergeants to Superintendent, which could be managed in-house. In 2021 Police Scotland employed its first Business Psychologist to maintain and continue to develop the promotion process and design new promotion exercises each year. The National Promotions Team Manager (a qualified Business Psychologist) and two Business Psychologists lead the design of all promotion exercises and processes considering best practice guidance from the British Psychological Society and the Association of Business Psychologists. Ongoing benchmarking takes place with other UK forces through regular forums led by the College of Policing.

In December 2023, the HMICS Culture Inspection considered the police officer promotion process making the following observations:

- The promotion policy is fair and equitable, and capable of providing the best opportunity for officers to succeed although stakeholders made comment on 'bolt-on random and arbitrary local processes ahead of the national process'
- Although the process is deemed to have improved over previous iterations, it is widely considered not to be as open, transparent and fair as it should be
- A number of promotion process improvements were identified, a number of which Police Scotland was already considering, including

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reviewing the make-up of promotion panels, implementing feedback systems and considering the balance of scenarios being used for evaluation

### Surveys and Workshops

Following the HMICS inspection, two feedback surveys were developed for use at the conclusion of promotion processes with the first designed to canvas feedback from assessors and the second to understand the candidate experience.

A sample group of assessors from a range of different backgrounds were identified, ensuring an even spread across divisions, departments and specialisms, and a male/female balance. A diverse sample group of candidates were selected, including successful and unsuccessful and those requesting reasonable adjustments. Eighteen assessors and 52 candidates were invited to complete the survey with 50% of assessors and 73% of candidates doing so.

Feedback from assessors was overwhelmingly positive with the vast majority providing ratings at 'Excellent' or 'Good'. On the whole, feedback from candidates navigating the process was very positive. Some negative ratings were noted with many comments relating to lack of communication from division. Some candidates felt more detailed communication should be provided on what to expect at assessment, including an understanding of what the assessors are expecting, and looking for, from candidates.

Promotion workshops have taken place with senior leaders from across Police Scotland, including SPF/ASPS representatives, to discuss feedback around promotion, and gather suggestions to improve candidate/assessor experiences.

### Improvement Action

As a result of the workshops and surveys the following areas are being focused on

- Better supporting officers engaging in the promotion process by establishing an intuitive and easily accessible intranet page with the new page being launched in 2025 following stakeholder engagement
- Improving support/connection with promotion single point of contacts across the organisation to improve guidance on sifting and improving feedback mechanisms
- Working on gateway to promotion separating MyCareer as application mechanism, allowing MyCareer to focus on original intended purpose and streamlining application for promotion for candidates and line managers

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- Align the appeal process with that of the College of Policing
- Regular communications with senior leaders, managers and stakeholders to set realistic expectations for candidates and applicants

### **Acting and Temporary Promotion**

Temporary promotions up to Inspector rank, and short-term acting opportunities (1 to 28 days) are approved locally and by the relevant Divisional Commander. Longer-term cover (29 days to 18 months require a Chief Supt endorsed business case to be remitted to the Resource Planning and Coordination Unit - RPCU). Temporary vacancies at Chief Inspector and above are subject to national advert and require a Chief Officer endorsed business case to be remitted to the RPCU.

Engagement has taken place with Divisional Commanders to understand how well embedded existing policy is and to identify variations in policy application. Feedback highlighted a significant level of inconsistency around temp/acting backfill, with variations evident in the following areas:

- Inconsistent criteria (i.e. when, why and what posts are backfilled)
- Variance in risk tolerance and thresholds for absorbing supervisory ranks (annual leave, sickness absence, resourcing shortfalls through abstractions)
- Inconsistent process and governance around talent management/candidate pools
- Variances in tenure applied to temporary/acting promotion periods
- Inconsistent approach to, and lack of policy for standardising reversions of periods of temporary duty (if officer fails promotion process)

The existing policy is silent on any minimum timescales before periods of acting and temporary duty can be progressed. There is practice (largely within local Policing) for using short-term acting ranks to provide supervisory resilience where critical Operational Base Levels would be otherwise breached. However, the consequential impact of these short-term acting provisions is associated abstractions at PC level, which further impacts OBL figures.

An optimal position for Local Policing would be to have enough officers at each supervisory rank to maintain agreed minimum effective numbers without recourse to temporary or acting ranks. This would include a built-in contingency for abstraction, however the reality is that this is not possible and Local Policing divisions feel they need the ready access to and ability to use short-term acting ranks for short periods.

In the absence of clear guidance/parameters Local Policing divisions could be at risk of routinely backfilling for supervisory abstractions (leave,

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RRRDs etc) impacting frontline service provisions whereas national divisions demonstrate a higher risk tolerance and greater appetite to 'gap' these types of instances.

Work is progressing on the development of a policy that outlines when it is appropriate to temporarily operate at a higher grade with a focus being on ensuring divisions have a clear process for acting opportunities.

### **Accelerated Leadership Programme**

The ALP was launched for officers in September 2020 to support the creation of a more rapid, diverse future pipeline of leaders and to support strategic workforce planning challenges. The intention was to provide officers who demonstrated high potential with a rounded development experience through rotations in operational, corporate and specialist areas of policing at each rank up to Chief Inspector in an accelerated manner.

The decision to progress a review of ALP is based on the fact that evaluation/feedback exercise (August 2024) highlighted a number of improvement areas (e.g. better access to training, improved Board feedback, improved divisional awareness and engagement with ALP process) along with the fact the College of Policing has changed its Fast Track National Assessment Centre approach from 2024. This is particularly relevant given Police Scotland has paid the College of Policing to formally assess potential ALP candidates through this process.

The review will identify and inform future considerations for all aspects of talent and succession planning and will specifically consider

- stronger links to the National Mentoring Programme
- clearly defined leadership development opportunities linked to coaching, external secondment, leadership exchange, shadowing etc
- standardised/clearly defined approaches to securing training whilst on ALP
- Ensuring Policing Together, Your Leadership Matters and EDI are 'golden threads' throughout the programme.

The project will be focused on ALP for police officers only, however research and learning will be noted for consideration of an ALP for police staff if that is deemed an appropriate option as part of a wider talent framework.

The review will aim to implement an updated approach by May 2025 (with further evaluation in May 2026).

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