



**College of
Policing**

**Direct Entry (Superintendent)
Programme**

National Assessment Centre

Overview for Candidates

2015

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Direct Entry (Superintendent) Programme

The Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions, led by Tom Winsor, looked at reforms to support the police in maintaining and improving the service that they give the public. The review's final report was asked to specifically consider entry routes to the police. The following was a recommendation on direct entry at superintendent level:

A national scheme for recruitment directly to the rank of superintendent should be established and brought into operation. Participants on the scheme should be persons of exceptional achievement and ability who have been assessed as having the potential to be senior police officers. (Recommendation 19)

To this end, the Direct Entry (Superintendent) Programme is designed to attract highly talented leaders from outside policing to come into the police service at a senior rank, bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas. This change represents one of the most significant changes ever to police recruitment. For the first time, officers can be recruited directly into senior positions having never worked for the police before.

The aim of the Direct Entry (Superintendent) Programme is to open up entry to the service to individuals who will bring new perspectives and diverse backgrounds to support the continuous development of policing, to provide a development programme that will ensure direct entry superintendents are competent in the superintendent role and inspire confidence in officers, staff and the public and to create a cohort that have the potential to further develop and acquire the skills and experience to progress to chief officer ranks.

Direct Entry Superintendents will hold the rank of Superintendent from day one of their employment with a force. They will take their place on an 18 month development programme that will focus on providing operational skills and experience and test leadership qualities in a policing context. Direct Entry Superintendents will be continuously assessed to ensure they are meeting the required standard. They will be in a probationary period for the duration of the development programme and will not remain on the Programme if they do not meet the standard – they will exit the Programme and therefore the job.

The aim of the assessment process is to assess leadership competencies and potential for further progression and to select only those individuals who will prosper on the Programme and contribute to its aims.

National Assessment Centre

Once you have applied to your chosen force and been successful at the in-force application sift, your details will be passed on to the Senior Selection Team at the College of Policing. You will be invited to attend the next stage of the assessment to become a Direct Entry Superintendent, namely the national assessment centre. This document will set out more information about what to expect.

What will be assessed?

The aim of the assessment centre is to measure your suitability for the Programme and for the role of Superintendent. We do this by assessing set criteria, namely the competencies from the Policing Professional Framework (PPF) at the 'Executive' level. The PPF is published by Skills For Justice (www.skillsforjustice.com). The competencies are:

Serving the Public

Promotes a real belief in public service, focusing on what matters to the public and will best serve their interests. Ensures that all staff understand the expectations, changing needs and concerns of different communities, and strive to address them. Builds public confidence by actively engaging with different communities, agencies and strategic stakeholders, developing effective partnerships at a local and national level. Understands partners' perspectives and priorities, working co-operatively with them to develop future public services within budget constraints, and deliver the best possible overall service to the public.

Leading Strategic Change

Thinks in the long term, establishing a compelling vision based on the values of the Police Service, and a clear direction for the force. Instigates and delivers structural and cultural change, thinking beyond the constraints of current ways of working, and is prepared to make radical change when required. Identifies better ways to deliver value for money services that meet both local and national needs, encouraging creativity and innovation within the force and partner organisations.

Leading the Workforce

Inspires people to meet challenging organisational goals, creating and maintaining the momentum for change. Gives direction and states expectations clearly. Talks positively about policing and what it can achieve, building pride and self-esteem. Creates enthusiasm and commitment throughout the force by rewarding good performance, and giving genuine recognition and praise. Promotes learning and development within the force, giving honest and constructive feedback to colleagues and investing time in coaching and mentoring staff.

Managing Performance

Translates the vision into action by establishing a clear strategy and ensuring appropriate structures are in place to deliver it. Sets ambitious but achievable timescales and deliverables, and monitors progress to ensure strategic objectives are met. Identifies and removes blockages to performance, managing the workforce and resources to deliver maximum value for money. Defines what good performance looks like, highlighting good practice. Confronts underperformance and ensures it is addressed. Delegates responsibilities appropriately and empowers people to make decisions, holding them to account for delivery.

Professionalism

Acts with integrity, in line with the values and ethical standards of the Police Service. Delivers on promises, demonstrating personal commitment, energy and drive to get things done. Defines and reinforces standards, demonstrating these personally and fostering a culture of personal responsibility throughout the force. Asks for and acts on feedback on own approach, continuing to learn and adapt to new circumstances. Takes responsibility for making tough or unpopular decisions, demonstrating courage and resilience in difficult situations. Remains calm and professional under pressure and in conditions of uncertainty. Openly acknowledges shortcomings in service and commits to putting them right.

Decision Making

Assimilates complex information quickly, weighing up alternatives and making sound, timely decisions. Gathers and considers all relevant and available information, seeking out and listening to advice from specialists. Asks incisive questions to test facts and assumptions, and gain a full understanding of the situation. Identifies the key issues clearly, and the inter-relationship between different factors. Considers the wider impact and implications of different options at a local and national level, assessing the costs, risks and benefits of each. Prepared to make the ultimate decision, even in conditions of ambiguity and uncertainty. Makes clear, proportionate and justifiable decisions, reviewing these as necessary.

Working with Others

Builds effective working relationships through clear communication and a collaborative approach. Maintains visibility and ensures communication processes work effectively throughout the force and with external bodies. Consults widely and involves people in decision-making, speaking in a way they understand and can engage with. Treats people with respect and dignity regardless of their background or circumstances, promoting equality and the elimination of discrimination. Treats people as individuals, showing tact, empathy and compassion. Negotiates effectively with local and national bodies, representing the interests of the Police Service. Sells ideas convincingly, setting out the benefits of a particular approach, and striving to reach mutually beneficial solutions. Expresses own views positively and constructively. Fully commits to team decisions.

The Exercises

There will be seven exercises that contribute equally to your overall assessment centre result. The exercises are not linked and they have been designed to be independent of each other. Four of these will be work-sample exercises, i.e. exercises that are designed to closely reflect the tasks that a police officer at this level does. They are an Operational Briefing, a Community Panel, a Written Exercise and a Partnership Exercise. These four exercises are purposefully not set in a policing context. Candidates at the Assessment Centre will have varying degrees of familiarity with policing and we are more interested in assessing general management and leadership skills than we are in assessing your understanding of policing terminology or specialist knowledge. In other words, the exercises closely reflect the types of tasks expected of a senior police officer, but will not be set in a force. The other three exercises are a Presentation, an Interview and Psychometric or Cognitive Ability Tests.

These exercises have been designed around the priority areas generated from research into the future leadership challenges facing the Police Service (Appendix B). Each exercise will measure some of the competencies above. For each exercise, you will be given a score for each competency it measures and an overall exercise mark which will reflect how well you completed the tasks that were set (using the rating scales at Appendix A).

Written Exercise

You will have two hours to complete this exercise. You will be provided with a set of documents which you are required to work through in order to complete a number of tasks. The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- Leading Strategic Change.
- Leading the Workforce.
- Working With Others.

You will be required to type your response to the Written Exercise tasks and will be provided with a laptop and a separate keyboard and mouse. The laptop computers contain Microsoft Word® word processing software which will have all the usual functions enabled (e.g. spelling and grammar checking, word count, etc).

You will also be provided with blank paper response sheet documents should you wish to include any additional information that you would prefer to handwrite rather than type (e.g. diagrams or tables).

Partnership Exercise

In the Partnership Exercise, you will be given information about a fictional scenario and asked to hold a meeting with two individuals to address the issues presented. You will meet the trained role actors who will take the roles of characters within the scenario. Before the meeting, you will have 20 minutes to read through candidate materials and prepare for the meeting. The meeting will last up to 15 minutes. The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- Serving the Public.
- Decision Making
- Working With Others

Operational Briefing

In the Operational Briefing, you will be given information about a fictional scenario and 40 minutes to read through the candidate materials to prepare. You will then be asked to give a briefing to two assessors on how you intend to address the issues contained in the scenario. You will have 10 minutes to give your briefing, followed immediately by a further 10 minutes in which the assessors will ask you questions about your briefing.

The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- Managing Performance.
- Professionalism.
- Decision Making.

Community Panel

In this exercise, you will be given 40 minutes to read through materials about a fictional scenario. After which time, you will be asked to host a community event, lasting up to 30 minutes, during which you should deliver your thoughts and proposals on the issues, in front of a panel of people from the community. The role of the community members will be played by three role actors. The exercise is designed to assess:

- Serving the Public.
- Professionalism.

Interview

The Interview is a competency based structured interview and contains a total of six questions over three competency areas. The questions focus on both previous experience and situations a candidate may face in the future. The interview lasts 30 minutes. The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- Managing Performance.
- Leading Strategic Change.
- Leading the Workforce.

Presentation

For this exercise, you will be given a discussion topic about a current policing issue and 30 minutes to prepare. You will then be asked to present in front of two assessors for up to 10 minutes. This will immediately be followed by a further 10 minutes during which the assessors will ask you questions about your presentation. This exercise is designed to assess:

- Leading Strategic Change
- Serving The Public
- Professionalism

Cognitive Ability Tests

Cognitive Ability Tests as a single assessment method have been found to be the most consistent predictor of job performance, academic performance and school results. The Direct Entry Programme will be intensive and will require candidates to take on large amounts of information and acquire knowledge quickly. It is reasonable to expect that candidates who perform better on these tests will be more able to cope with learning demands of the Direct Entry Programme.

The psychometric ability tests you will do as part of this assessment will be short online versions of verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning.

- Verbal reasoning looks at the ability to interpret verbal information and reach correct conclusions and is relevant to work involving communicating ideas or the understanding of written information.
- Numerical reasoning looks at the ability to analyse and draw inferences from numerical information and data to solve everyday and business-related problems.

- Abstract reasoning looks at the ability to think and act quickly and solve novel problems. It also provides a strong link to the potential to learn new information/tasks.

Your results for all three will be combined to give you one exercise mark. Though they will not be assigned any competency grades, the overall exercise mark for these will contribute just as much as the other exercises, i.e. they will make up one-seventh of your overall performance at the Assessment Centre.

Before you complete these tests, we will provide you with more information and an opportunity to practice.

Decision Making

Once all the exercises are finished your overall performance is considered. If you meet the requisite standard will be 'recommended' to go on to the Direct Entry (Superintendent) Programme, and those who do not reach the standard will be 'not recommended'.

No final decision will be made until all of your exercises are completed and your performance on each has been evaluated. It is designed to be a challenging process and each exercise in itself is challenging. You are not expected to 'pass' every single exercise or the competency areas in order to achieve a grade of 'recommended'. With that in mind, even though you may feel you haven't performed as well as you could in a particular exercise, across the seven exercises, you will have ample opportunity to demonstrate your capability.

In order to be successful and gain a place on the Programme, you must be 'recommended' at the National Assessment Centre **and** be selected by a force.

Who are the Assessors?

At the Assessment Centre, you will be assigned an assessor group. This group number relates to a team of 4 assessors who will assess your performance (in pairs) on every

exercise. Each assessor teams is made up of two Service Assessors and two External Assessors. The Service Assessors are either current serving officers at the rank of Superintendent or above or retired officers drawn from a reserve list (which is held to assist where current serving officers may be away in unforeseen circumstances) from forces throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The External Assessors are people who are entirely independent from the Police Service who are involved in selection at senior levels within the public and/or private sector.

All assessors are appropriately trained in the generic principles and skills associated with the objective and fair assessment of others. Assessors also receive training in the specific exercises used at the Assessment Centre.

Who else will be there?

Alongside your fellow candidates at the Assessment Centre, there will be a number of staff, who keep the process running smoothly and some visitors.

Director and Co-Directors

The role of the Directors is primarily one of quality assurance, to ensure common standards across all candidate groups, but also to assess the process on behalf of the Police Service.

Assessment Centre Staff – Quality Assurance and Management Team

The most important aspect of any assessment centre is the accuracy and consistency of the assessment. All assessors will be trained in the exercises they will use. Quality assurers will occasionally sit in on live exercises, to review assessments, to monitor standards and to support assessors, thereby adding value to the confidence that you, assessors and the Police Service can have in the robustness of the process.

In addition, the overall management and administration of the Assessment Centre is overseen by an on-site management team.

Visitors

The Direct Entry (Superintendent) Programme represents a significant change for policing and as such, the National Assessment Centre will be of interest to a number of stakeholders involved in policing. As a result, there will be a number of visitors

interested in observing the process. Therefore in addition to the assessors and role actors, there may be a visitor observing the exercise. They are not there to make an assessment of you and will have no input whatsoever on how the assessors evaluate your performance.

How are the exercises designed?

The psychologists within College of Policing Senior Selection Team use a structured Exercise Design Model as the basis for the development of the exercises.

The Exercise Design Model consists of a series of stages that each exercise goes through to create a set of exercises that are reliable, valid, relevant, realistic and fair to all candidates. The design model starts with 'Stakeholder Consultation' and progresses through a series of subsequent stages which include 'Critical Scenario Interviews', 'Exercise Writing', 'Exercise Consultation', 'Pilot' and 'Training Development'.

At each stage, senior police officers and stakeholders from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are consulted about the content of the exercises, and their associated marking guides, to ensure that the exercises are realistic and relevant to the target level. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights (EDHR) advisors are involved in the design.

Appendix A

Rating Scales

The assessors use the ORCE (Observe, Record, Classify & Evaluate) model of assessment, which is a universally recognised and applied model for assessing.

The assessors observe candidates' performance and make a record of what they said and did; then they classify this evidence against the competency related criteria. Once assessors have done this they evaluate candidates' performance in each competency area using an A to D rating scale (see below). Assessors then award an overall exercise mark using a 1 – 6 Exercise Mark scale (see overleaf). Assessors initially decide upon grades and exercise marks for candidates' performances independently of one another and then collectively agree final competency grades and exercise mark for each candidate for each exercise.

Competency Grade Scale

This scale requires assessors to evaluate both the quantity (frequency) and quality (strength) of the evidence provided when awarding grades.

| | |
|----------|--|
| A | Substantial positive evidence of the competency observed with regard to the quality and quantity of the evidence, and few or no areas for development observed. |
| B | Positive evidence of the competency observed and some areas for development but on balance more positive evidence with regard to the quality and quantity of the evidence. |
| C | Some positive evidence of the competency observed but on balance more areas for development with regard to the quality and quantity of the evidence. |
| D | Substantial areas for development identified and little or no positive evidence of the competency observed, with regard to the quality and quantity of the evidence. |

Exercise Mark Scale

The Exercise Mark Scale is used to award the candidate an overall exercise mark for the exercise. The two statements at each point on the Exercise Mark Scale are intended to be considered together and not as separate statements.

| | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Very Effective Task Performance The candidate performed the task very effectively and almost entirely achieved the aims of the exercise. Performance on competencies was exclusively high grades. |
| 2 | Effective Task Performance The candidate performed the task effectively and mostly achieved the aims of the exercise. Performance on the competencies was mostly high grades. |
| 3 | Satisfactory Task Performance The candidate performed the task to a satisfactory standard and met some of the aims of the exercise although some elements were not satisfactory. On balance performance on competencies was more high grades than low grades. |
| 4 | Just Below Satisfactory Task Performance The candidate performed the task to a below-satisfactory standard overall and did not quite meet the aims of the exercise, although there were some areas that were effectively handled. On balance performance on competencies was more low grades than high grades. |
| 5 | Ineffective Task Performance The candidate performed the task largely ineffectively and did not meet the aims of the exercise, although there were some areas that were acceptable. Performance on the competencies was mostly low grades. |
| 6 | Very Ineffective Task Performance The candidate performed the task very ineffectively and did not meet the aims of the exercise, although there may have been some minor areas that were acceptable. Performance on the competencies was exclusively low grades. |

PRIORITY AREAS FOR DIRECT ENTRY SCHEMES

Future challenges facing the Police Service over the next 5 years.

1. Maintaining service delivery during on-going austerity.
2. Changing types of crime (e.g. cyber, cross border, population demographics).
3. Internal organisational change needed (e.g. structure, service length, low morale, CPD culture).
4. Need for wider and deeper collaboration (e.g. new partners, mergers).
5. Effective use of new technologies by the Police.
6. Responding to increased scrutiny, accountability, and demands for transparency.
7. Increasing influence of the political environment.
8. Maintaining public confidence.
9. The need to redefine success (e.g. incentive based Govt funding, increased victim focus).
10. Increasing demand beyond just 'cutting crime'.

The abilities, skills and characteristics needed by future leaders to deal with the challenges the Police Service will face.

1. Personal integrity and commitment to public transparency (e.g. exemplary personal integrity and actions, able to communicate and set standards for others, greater demonstration of transparency).
2. Flexible transformational leadership skills (e.g. move beyond command and control, trusting staff to get on with their jobs and applying discretion, empower and engage staff, leading a corporate organisation over operational management).
3. Resilience and positivity (e.g. a positive attitude to making things work, able to work under pressure and with uncertainty, staying calm under pressure and stick by decisions).
4. Internal business and financial skills (e.g. business acumen, deal with the challenge of on-going budget reductions, able to hold deliverables to account, understanding commissioning and procurement).
5. Building integrated strategic partnerships (e.g. develop partnership working on a strategic level outside policing, more radical and integrated collaboration, sharing power and autonomy with others).
6. Able to lead effective organisational change (e.g. positive to create momentum for change, comfortable with facilitating organisational change, leading staff through change, using continuous improvement).
7. Holding a long term, strategic, vision (e.g. thinking about the longer term benefits for the organisation/service beyond personal tenure, a strong vision with the ability to translate this).
8. Creativity and innovation (e.g. to identify new ways of doing things).
9. Open-minded and willing to challenge existing culture and practice (e.g. look beyond what has always been done with a fresh perspective, challenge the status-quo, a willingness to challenge authority).
10. Humility and self professional development (e.g. reflective of own practice and influence from others, a willingness to compromise).
11. Political astuteness (e.g. greater political awareness at local and national level, a more outward facing approach politically, how to influence political leaders).

The abilities, skills and characteristics that the Police Service would benefit from bringing in through Direct Entry.

1. Challenging existing culture and practices (e.g. prepared to think independently, ask why things are done this way, less deferential to rank).
2. Taking learning from other organisations (e.g. an outward focus to learn from other organisations, experience of how things can work differently, sharing best practice).
3. Greater creativity and innovation (e.g. able to think of new ways of solving problems, radically innovative, willingness to take risks, supporting the ideas of others).
4. Leading effective organisation change (e.g. positive about change and able to persuade others of its value, able to implement transformational change, delivering rapid change).
5. Financial confidence and commerciality (e.g. commercial awareness and confidence, entrepreneurial skills).
6. Able to lead staff through challenging times (e.g. able to adapt leadership style, making bold decisions, inspire others to achieve goals, have a greater influence).
7. Supportive staff management (e.g. effective general management skills such as performance management, welfare, and development, able to engage staff).
8. Political astuteness (e.g. understanding the political dynamics, able to operate in a more political environment).
9. A focus on customer service and victim support (e.g. understanding victim experience, listening to the public, ingrained customer service ethos).
10. Comfortable with accountability and transparency (e.g. comfortable with public scrutiny, understand public perception of what is acceptable, honesty when mistakes are made).
11. Effective internal and external communication skills (e.g. using language the public understand).