Medical Standards – New Recruits

This information applies to the following roles:

Police Officer (all entry routes, including Direct Entry and Transferees), Special Constable, Community Support Officer, Detention Officer.

British Transport Police genuinely care for officers and staff.  We understand they will undertake tasks that can be physically and psychologically demanding and as a result all new recruits need to be fit and healthy.  To test this, new recruits will be asked to undertake a job-related fitness test and a medical assessment.

As part the medical assessment you will be asked to complete the following:

* Medical history questionnaire (completed by all applicants)
* Medical history questionnaire (completed by General Practitioner)
* Vision testing, including colour vision
* Audio test
* BMI, BP
* Medical assessment of physical and psychological health
* Musculoskeletal assessment
* Drugs and alcohol testing.

Every candidate receives a detailed and individual health assessment including drug and alcohol testing.  Having a well-managed pre-existing health condition will not necessarily preclude you from undertaking any of the roles; cases are assessed individually to ensure you can carry out the role safely without putting yourself, your health or others at risk.  Where this cannot be achieved you may not be suitable for the role you have applied for. We may, with your informed consent, need to write to your GP/Specialist for further information to aid assessment If you have a health condition or a disability. Reasonable adjustments will also be considered.

The information given in this document is a guide to help you understand the assessment process and determine if you need to improve your health to pass the medical assessment.

**Should you have any health concerns it is strongly recommend that you consult with your GP as soon as is practicably possible.**

Fitness

Job Relate Fitness Testing (JRFT) will form part of the Police Officer application process and will continue throughout your career at regular intervals.  Candidates will be expected to undertake a running test known as a Multi Stage Shuttle Test / Bleep Test.

Regular exercise can make you feel great, plus it makes your heart stronger, helping you to keep your blood pressure down.

To improve your chances:

Adults aged 19 to 64 should try to be active daily and should do:

* At least 150 minutes of [moderate aerobic activity](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/#moderate) such as cycling or brisk walking every week

and
* [Strength exercises](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/#sets) on two or more days a week that work all the major muscles (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms)

One way to do your recommended 150 minutes of weekly physical activity is to do 30 minutes on five days every week.  To prepare for your JRFT it is wise to incorporate at least two-three runs as part of your 150 minutes per week aerobic activity.

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise)

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week)

Eyesight

Police Officers, Special Constables, PCSO and Detention Officers all need a good standard of vision to ensure that they are able to protect themselves and undertake the role effectively.  Most colour vision deficiencies are also acceptable.  Corrective aids can be worn as part of the medical assessment and as part of the role.

To improve your chances:

If you are worried about eyesight, you should ask someone with good vision to assess whether you can read a number plate from 20 metres (with corrective aids if you already use them).

It is recommended that everyone has an assessment by an Optician every two-years. If you have any concerns you should attend for a full test with an optician. It would be helpful if this was done prior to the medical assessment as this will prevent any delays that could have been avoided.

Hearing

You need to hear well enough to understand information and instructions that are given verbally and often in noisy environments or via a radio.  We are able to consider and encourage applications from candidates who wear hearing aids.  Where hearing aids are worn, we may need to refer to a specialist who can perform the required hearing tests.

To improve your chances:

Start by adopting good lifestyle habits to protect your hearing.

Avoid exposure to too much noise 48 hours prior to your medical assessment, such as riding a motorcycle, using loud tools, using headphones or attending loud music events etc.

Further information can be found at:

[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/hearing-health/protect-your-hearing](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/hearing-health/protect-your-hearing/)

Medical Standards & Guidelines in detail

This web page is only meant as a guide.  Every candidate receives a detailed and individual health assessment.  Having a well-managed pre-existing condition may not preclude you from undertaking any of the roles.  If you have a health condition or a disability, reasonable adjustments will be considered but where this cannot be achieved you may not be able to safely carry out the role of a Police Officer, Special Constable, Community Support Officer or Detention Officer..

The following link provides you with further and detailed information in relation to the medical standards

**HOC 59/2004 – Medical Standards**
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-recruitment-standards-medical-standards-for-police-recruitment](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-recruitment-standards-medical-standards-for-police-recruitment)

**Amended Eyesight Standards**
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/circular-0072019-eyesight-standards-police-recruitment](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/circular-0072019-eyesight-standards-police-recruitment)

Smoking

Smokers are more likely to have heart and lung problems that may make passing the medical and/or fitness test more difficult. An assessment of your respiratory health will be undertaken and where necessary the nurse will perform a spirometry (lung function) test as part of the assessment process.

To improve your chances:

Stop smoking – Further information can be found at [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk/)  or call the NHS stop smoking help line on 0800 0224332

Recreational Drug Use

Drugs, such as cannabis, ecstasy and cocaine are against the law and must never be used by Police Officers or Police Staff.   Testing is part of the medical assessment process of your application.  A positive result is likely to affect your application.

To improve your chances:

Avoid all illegal drugs, including one off use – further information can be found at [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com/)

Alcohol

Drinking too much can cause high blood pressure as well as other health issues.  Over time the pressure on the walls of your arteries means they are more likely to get clogged up or weaken your heart leading to heart failure.

To improve your chances:

**You should not regularly drink more than two units per day or 14 units per week (spread over three-four days).**

1 pint (5.2%) = 3 units

1 medium wine (175ml) = 2.3 Units

If you are worried, visit [www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support) or [www.drinkaware.co.uk](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/)

Diet / Weight & BMI

Guidelines on Police recruitment indicate that you should have a BMI of between 18 and 30.  However, as everyone is different cases above 36 are likely to be advised that a risk assessment needs to be undertaken against role activities.

If you have a high BMI the most important thing you can do is to reduce your weight and start in plenty of time prior to your application and/or medical screening.

To improve your chances:

* Eat three balanced meals a day
* Increase your intake of fruit and vegetables to at least five portions per day
* Increase your intake of high fibre foods
* Cut down on saturated and processed fats
* Reduce sugar intake
* Reduce alcohol intake
* Reduce salt
* Undertake regular exercise

Further information can be found at:

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator)

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/height-weight-chart/?tabname=you-and-your-weight](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/height-weight-chart/?tabname=you-and-your-weight)

[www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/support/healthy-living/managing-your-weight](http://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/support/healthy-living/managing-your-weight)

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/5-a-day-tips](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/5-a-day-tips)

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/)